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THE FRIGHT.

after reading
BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE HEIRESS" "THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER"
"THE PRINCE AND THE PEDLAR,"
"NAN DARRELL," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1839.

Printed by T. C. Newby, Angel Hill, Bury.

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THE FRIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

THE cloth had been removed, the dessert placed, the fire stirred, and the butler had left the apartment more than five minutes, yet not one word had been spoken by either of the two gentlemen who sat at opposite ends of the table, placed with mathematical exactitude in the centre of the large dining room at Rolleston Court. He who sat at the lower

end was a young man of pleasing exterior, though on the present occasion his whole demeanour shewed anxiety and embarrassment;—he who presided was of middle age with features fine but stern ; a dark complexion, and an eye that instead of sometimes melting into softness, then kindling into joy or anger, seemed ever lit by an inward flame bright yet chilling to the beholder ; burning, with the steady and concentrated force of the furnace, not flashing with the fitful blaze of the fire. It was an eye from which the hypocrite turned with an involuntary feeling of self conviction ;—beneath which the timid trembled, certain of meeting with no sympathy ;—in which the suffering read no hope of pity or assistance ;—of which the mean and base dared not encounter a second glance. Even those who could meet that eye with an unquailing look did not wish to measure their strength with his, but returned his courtesy with a courtesy as stately.

It was rarely, very rarely that his glance grew keener than usual, or that he appeared to take more pains to fathom the plans or the character of one person than another; and it was this which rendered his searching look more striking and more awful:—it was so steady—so unvarying. He never seemed to be puzzled in deciphering a character by any deception or inconsistency, and rarely shewed any sign of triumph at his success. To see and to read appeared to him the same. The motives of the human mind (more difficult to understand than the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt) were to him clear and easy as the first lessons of the primer. His penetration was not merely individual, but universal; intuitive, not acquired; seldom avowed in words to others, and still more seldom employed for personal profit or ambition. Either there was no softness in his spirit, or that keen eye never shewed it;—either he found no noble motives in the human mind, or love to

God and love to man, having no responsive chords within his own bosom, awoke no sympathy in look or tone. This stern expression was little altered whether he contemplated the sublime or the commonplace ; the beautiful or the distorted ; the smiles of affection or the frowns of envy and malice. You might fancy him the hero of some ancient legend, and believe that he had bartered his soul to the evil one for the power of reading hearts at a glance, and like all traffickers with the arch fiend had gained by his bargain neither profit nor pleasure. He had acquired the power of seeing—but lost the power of enjoying ; he looked on the base and mean with contempt, but he felt no sympathy with the high and the noble ;—he lived unloving and unloved.

Such at least was the character given of Mr. Rolleston by one who had occasionally been staying in his house, (a friend of his nephew's Mr. Trevyllian) but as Captain Rawdon was young and lively, and full of sympathies and an-

tipathies, and a little inclined to exaggeration his account must be received with considerable limitations.

“ You judge my uncle too severely,” was Trevyllian’s remark three days before sitting opposite that uncle in his own dining room, as already described, having accidentally overheard his friend’s summing up of Mr. Rolleston’s imperfections. “ He has ever been kind to me in essentials, and often in trifles, though I admit an occasional sternness in manner. The fact is, Rawdon, that to your mercurial spirit the mathematical precision and stately regularity of the proprietor and household of Rolleston were absolute martyrdom ; and you were so surprised and annoyed at my uncle’s finding out that you were quizzing him, instead of being the dupe, as you believed, of your deferential compliments, that you consider his penetration more minute and universal than it really is.”

“ There may be something in that,” replied

his friend with a laugh, "for I really do believe had I stayed there much longer that I should have been transformed into one of the high backed formal chairs, or at best, into such a 'mechanised automaton' as the very particular old butler, or the very starch old housekeeper. I began to fancy that I could not move of my own free will and power, but must submit to be properly placed by the footman. My arms commenced growing out in angles like the arms of an easy chair—I felt the housemaid rubbing my legs with the duster—and acquired such a stiffness in the back that I have since been several times mistaken for a drill serjeant ; to say nothing of mortally offending my ancient aunt, Lady Susan Hartupp, by making only a slight inclination of the head, instead of the courtier like bow of my younger days. If I had not sometimes rushed out of the room and taken a scamper down the alleyed walks, to the horror of the old gardener, and the injury of

his clipped yew hedges, over which I leapt, or through which I scrambled to convince myself that I had the power of locomotion, I should certainly have been transformed to wood or stone by your uncle's keen, unvarying gaze. Not that he seemed to look at me as if he wished to see me, but simply because he could not help it; and thus he seemed to look at every body. Then his remark without the slightest bitterness of tone or change of feature;—'Young man you are wasting your time and talents, I am not the dupe you think me,'—after I had been playing deferential and polite for the last two hours to persuade him to let you enter the army, as you desired, was the most awful rebuke I ever encountered. I shiver at the remembrance even now—it was so fearfully unearthly; as if he were of another mould—above man's weaknesses and his delights;—seeing through all—feeling with none. I doubt if he ever forgave me, yet he shewed no triumph] at my overwhelming

confusion, of which I was myself ashamed. The only symptom of humanity I ever discovered was once when I had been praising you to another, and accidentally turning round on your uncle, fancied that his lips had uncurled into something like an approving smile—the semblance of a sun-beam; but his eye remained the same; and before I could decide touching the mouth, to my entire satisfaction, the lips had resumed their usual stern compression. If he can love any one, Trevyllian, it is you; but rely not on his affection should your wishes clash with his; I mean not in trifles—he is above those; and there is a grandeur in his formality which, making it almost sublime, redeems it from ridicule. He is not fidgety—scarcely formal in little things;—his particularity seems rather the excess of order—a mathematical precision carried to an extreme;—the clearest perception guided and governed by the sternest decision;—the ideal trampled beneath the real. Either he never

had affections like other men, or he is the most obdurate despot, the most tyrannical tyrant over his own heart that the world ever saw ; and if so, I envy not such despotism. I would rather sympathise with friends, than govern slaves. But you are hurt, Trevyllian, so I will not analyse your uncle further, but say as I said before, if he can love any he loves you ; only adding my previous warning not to rely on his affection should your wishes clash."

" You are wrong in your judgment, Rawdon, as I can prove. Though at first much averse to my marriage, from not holding the fair sex in very high estimation, finding that my happiness depended on the union, he has since given his consent."

" Granted permission, I have no doubt, with that saturnine look with which he grants every request to which he vouchsafes a gracious reply ; a look which says as plainly as words could say ;—' Take what you want, you

will soon rue the gift !’—in short, just such a look as when he gave me leave to launch the canoe on his lake, aware that within five minutes I should be floundering among the fish ; invading the regions of the Naiads,” observed Captain Rawdon.

“Finish the story,” said his friend, “and add, that, by his exertions, you were saved from becoming food for those very fish ; or torn to pieces by the infuriated Naiads.”

“He could not, in common decency, see his nephew’s friend and his own guest drowned without making an attempt to save him :—had he done so he might have been convicted at the coroner’s inquest of unjustifiable homicide. Think how derogatory such a proceeding would have been to his dignity ! There, you need not look so grave, and I will do him full justice on this point, at least, and admit that he swam towards me with the speed of a friend, and dragged me out with the resolute grasp of a foe, shewing a motherly anxiety for

my recovery, as the old housekeeper so pathetically asserted. I have strong doubts on that last point, having seen no signs of such motherly watching; and if so it could only have been a touch of remorse for having granted my foolish request, or a dread of that same degrading coroner's inquest. It is true that he did not banter me on the accident, though certainly caused by my own foolhardiness, but his 'good morning' when we next met, without any reference to the past, was in such a tone that I most heartily wished I had fulfilled my desire of departing the preceding night without a meeting. The thanks were frozen on my lips;—the gratitude that I had been nursing into a glow for the last twelve hours died away with a hiss and a sputter, like a flame extinguished by the outpouring of a bucket of water. Unable to answer, in my confusion I stumbled over the rug,—overturned a chair,—upset the table,—burst into a nervous hysterical laugh beyond my power to

control; and at last rushed out of the room, and soon after out of the house:—any thing rather than again encounter that worse than gorgon look. Not to have been lord of Rolleston Court with all its wide domain could I have met again the cold, sardonic smile with which he considered my disasters. Had he been in a passion I could have borne it humbly, and forgiven him; but that smile! which was scarcely a smile, and so much the worse as it addressed itself more to the imagination, and was thus endowed with greater power!—A horse laugh would have been nothing to it. To face such another smile was beyond me, so, coward as I was, I crept out at the back door without waiting for your return, though momentarily expected, bidding my servant follow with the horses. I cannot deny having left his house in a very unceremonious and improper manner; but then I sent him the same day an eloquent epistle containing my thanks and apologies:—yes,—absolutely eloquent—

look as incredulous as you will. What hours of thought did its composition cost me ! I wonder I escaped a brain fever from the agonies of its authorship, for his searching eye seemed fixed upon me while I wrote, and the sardonic smile with which he would peruse it was ever before me. With just such a look as he granted me permission to navigate the unsafe canoe can I fancy he gave you permission to take unto yourself a wife, anticipating doubtless some like catastrophe."

"Not seeing the resemblance between my marrying Miss Lowther, and your trying to manage an unmanageable canoe, I cannot understand why my uncle should anticipate the like catastrophe," replied Trevyllian gravely.

"I cry your pardon ! I forgot for the moment that you were a lover, but had not the slightest intention I assure you of being uncivil to Miss Lowther, for whom I have all possible respect and admiration," said his laughing

friend. I shall for the fortune receive with suspicion any gifts or permissions from Mr. Rolleston to myself; but if he really will do his best in a gracious manner to promote your happiness, I will think more favorably of him for your sake, and even risk encountering that horrid smile again, whilst I tender him my thanks and apologies in person, Tell me truly, did he listen with any tolerable degree of sympathy—nay even decent patience to your enumeration of your mistress's charms?"

"Will you never learn, Rawdon, to talk less wildly?" asked his friend, not very well pleased with his remarks on Mr. Rolleston, which though exaggerated, had some foundation in fact. "I admit that my uncle did not at first listen to my loverlike rhapsodies with flattering attention, but I am convinced that my happiness is his first object in life. Without one word from me on the subject he has promised to make a handsome addition to my fortune."

“Are you to reside with the old gentleman?” asked Rawdon with a glance full of mischief.

“No. Aware, he said, that the young and the old have different ideas on many points, and that he had acquired some peculiarities from his long seclusion, he presents me with Greenhill and the surrounding estate, on my wedding day. I could see by his quivering lip, the only sign of emotion, how much a separation cost him; and feel more firmly bound to him for the great self sacrifice. I owe him much—very much!”

“So you do, Trevyllian; and so do I in the way of apology if all this is done in good faith, as I suppose it must be; but there is always so much grimness even in his kindness that I feel half terrified at the idea of becoming his pet, of which I see, by your looks, you think there is no chance. Perhaps not;—but let him perform his promises, and I will be his most obedient, humble servant for the

rest of my life. What will he say to the discovery of the new will, which transfers the twenty thousand pounds supposed to have been left to Miss Lowther by her aunt, half to charities, and half to her insidious relative?"

"It will effect no change in his views. I never knew him swayed by mercenary motives, and prudence need not interfere in our case, as I have enough for both. He asked no questions concerning her wealth or connections, saying he could rely on my choice; and only heard of her supposed fortune incidentally."

"Indeed! the uncle and guardian as generous and disinterested as the lover! Well the times are improving there is no denying that! But cannot this last will be set aside? I am always for rewarding virtue—it makes such a pretty moral."

"You must work out some less commonplace moral in the present instance; for even the lawyers admit that litigation would be waste of time and money."

“ That is a pity ! but I will see what I can do about a deeper and more *recherché* moral. You say your uncle cares nothing for this loss of fortune ? ”

“ I feel convinced that he will not ; and his letter, which I expect to-morrow, will compel you to do him justice. ”

“ Then you have not heard from him since he received the information ; ” said Rawdon in a tone denoting his suspicions of Mr. Rolleston’s disinterestedness. “ Well, we shall see. ”

“ Yes, we shall see ! ” observed Trevyllian with an assured and confident manner.

But the assured and confident manner with which he repeated the words then, and on the following day when he held his uncle’s letter in his hand, vanished before the conclusion of its perusal, short as it was. With pallid cheek and staring eyes, he stood for some moments as if paralysed by the shock, then recovering from the stunning effects of those few lines,

rushed into action to dispel his fears, and within half an hour was on his road to Rolleston Court. His conversation with Rawdon, already related, had awakened neither doubt nor anxiety, so that his uncle's command to break off his engagement was the greater shock from his not having anticipated the possibility of such an event. The letter was as follows :—

MY DEAR NEPHEW,

“ I have ever sought your happiness—I seek it now:—that happiness cannot be promoted by a union with Miss Lowther. Break off your engagement without delay ;—there are others in the world as fair, and far more worthy of your regard. Ask no questions—offer no arguments—nothing shall ever induce me to consent to this marriage ;—you know that my resolutions are not to be changed. This decision may give you present pain, but it will save you from future misery ;

and in all other points, you shall find me, as I have ever been, not only anxious to gratify, but to anticipate your wishes.

“Your affectionate Uncle,

THOMAS ROLLESTON.”

As he pursued his way, Trevyllian looked at the letter in this light and in that, hoping to decide it a forgery ; but—alas for his hopes ! the abrupt, decided style would have identified the writer, had the characters been in an unknown hand.

“The letter is evidently written in haste and agitation. There is some misapprehension, which a few minutes will set to rights,” repeated the nephew for the hundredth time to re-assure himself, as the carriage neared the house ; but his uncle’s look—the cold touch of his hand, chilled all his hopes, and hushed the questions which he had been so eager to pour forth.

“There is just time to dress for dinner if you go to your room directly,” observed Mr Rolleston coldly, after the usual salutations, expressing no surprise at his arrival ; and his nephew, for the first time, impressed with some of the awe which had overwhelmed Rawdon, acted on the hint without a comment.

Mr. Rolleston had for some hours been sitting at a window overlooking the road to the house, and as the carriage advanced an expression of triumph lit up his stern, and generally immoveable features ; but it faded away as he noticed the changeful cheek, and hurried step of the young man. He foresaw remonstrance, if not rebellion ; any thing but passive obedience ; and his contracted bow and compressed lip made him look the despot which so many deemed him.

Trevyllian glanced at his uncle, as they sat facing each other after the servants had withdrawn, as we have described in our first page,

but turned away with a shudder from the steady gaze of those stern eyes. Rawdon's prediction of what his uncle's conduct would be should their wishes ever clash, came across him with the force of a prophecy and checked his speech.

Mr. Rolleston must have remarked his embarrassment as he turned away; but no change of expression shewed that he saw it and his tone was as usual, or only a little more cold as he broke the long and distressing silence.

"Fill your glass, Henry. You must be fatigued with such rapid travelling; and yet I must ask you to go over to Greenhill tomorrow, having just heard of the sudden death of the steward."

"Yes, sir," replied his nephew, startled by his address from a gloomy reverie, and not half comprehending his meaning.

"Fill your glass," repeated his uncle.

Trevyllian obeyed; drinking the wine me-

chanically, whilst Mr. Rolleston proceeded to explain his wishes concerning Greenhill and a new steward, making arrangements that would detain his nephew there for several days, never referring in the most distant way to his late engagement, and utterly regardless as it seemed of his increasing emotion.

His doubts and fears growing too intolerable for endurance, Trevyllian at length summoned courage to know the worst, and by alluding to the past compel an explanation.

“Till the 15th my dear uncle, my time is entirely at your disposal, but on that day, as you already know, I have engaged to meet Miss Lowther in town.”

“Have you not received my letter?” asked Mr. Rolleston coldly.

“Yes, sir; and hence my sudden journey;—but I hope—”

“And I hope to hear no discussion on the subject, but to meet with that obedience,

which my near relationship, and the care lavished on your childhood give me a right to expect," interrupted Mr. Rolleston sternly; adding with more of the heat of passion than he usually exhibited :—" As you value my regard, never again let me hear Miss Lowther's name. You look fatigued—good night !"

" My dear sir—my dear uncle.—What am I to understand? I cannot allow you to leave me without an explanation. There must be some mistake—I entreat you to listen to me"—exclaimed the young man, rising abruptly to detain or follow his uncle, too much astounded by his words to speak coherently.

" There is no mistake ; and your agitation proves that you comprehend my meaning. Explanations would be painful to both ; and were I to listen to you till mid-night, or mid-day my resolution would remain the same ;—nothing shall ever induce me to consent to your union with Miss Lowther. If you

would retain my regard break off your engagement at once—and for ever !”

“ Impossible, sir ! neither my love, nor my honor will admit of such a proceeding. You were never mercenary ; and are too generous and high minded not to feel that Miss Lowther’s loss of fortune only rivets our engagement the more firmly. True affection is but the stronger in misfortune ; it would be base and unmanly to desert her now.”

A faint flush came for an instant into Mr. Rolleston’s sallow cheek, and that steady searching eye before which so many quailed, sank, for as brief a space, beneath the indignant yet pleading gaze of his agitated nephew ; but if hurt by his remonstrance, or the mention of mercenary motives, he was not turned from his purpose, and his cold, commanding tone should have convinced his listener that his hopes were vain, and that neither sympathy, nor yielding were to be expected.

“ A sober man, Trevyllian, may be prudent

without being mercenary; and a young lady with three thousand pounds is such a different person from a young lady with twenty three thousand, that a reasonable guardian may require his ward—an affectionate uncle his nephew, to break off his engagement, without deserving the epithet base or unmanly.”

“ I never accused you, my dear uncle, of being mercenary : I know you never were—you never can be ; and surely prudence does not require so great a sacrifice. I want no fortune with Grace—I have more than enough for us both.”

“ You forget that Greenhill was only to be yours on the day of your marriage with my approval :—that approval shall never be given to your union with Grace Lowther.”

“ Say not that last, my dear uncle, I entreat you. Do not mar my happiness by opposing the marriage on which that happiness depends. Give Greenhill to another if you will, only

give your consent to, your blessing on my union."

"Never!" exclaimed Mr. Rolleston vehemently;—then instantly checking himself he continued with his former coldness. "You are in no profession, and what you inherit from your mother is not enough to support you in the style to which you have been accustomed."

"It is not my fault, sir, that I am in no profession; at your entreaty, I may say command, I yielded my own wishes."

"And would now taunt me with that yielding:—perhaps claim to be my heir in consequence," remarked Mr. Rolleston with a withering sneer."

"You cannot—you do not believe me capable of such ingratitude," replied the nephew hurt at his words. "I only meant to say that I am ready to enter into any profession, if you approve; or if not, the interest of the twelve

thousand pounds, which is mine by inheritance, will content the humble wishes of Grace and myself."

"You are deceived, Trevyllian—deluded by a fleeting fancy. The interest of twelve thousand pounds in the funds, at the present day, will not suffice for your wishes, considering how you have been reared; and ignorant as you are of the management of money, an attempt to increase your income will ensure a loss. Neither Miss Lowther nor her friends can blame you for declining an engagement sought under such different circumstances."

"The whole world—my own heart, would blame me, could I thus act," cried Trevyllian indignantly.

"The praise or the censure of the world is alike worthless!—its judgments are never just;—and, for your own heart,—get a new love, and it will soon find arguments to justify its change."

"Never!" again exclaimed Trevyllian pass-

ionately, urged almost to frenzy by his uncle's cynicism.

“Psha! You would not be the first who has changed—nor the last. One would take you for a simpleton of sixteen, instead of a generally sensible young man of nearly one and twenty,” observed Mr. Rolleston unmoved by his passion.

“In your present temper, sir, it would be useless to plead our strong attachment.”

“Perfectly so;” interrupted his uncle.

“Then I must argue the point, as a point of honor.”

“There is no need for any argument;—the point is already decided against you,” observed his uncle. “You were engaged to Miss Lowther with a fortune of twenty three thousand pounds;—you were deceived—the deception is discovered, and you are free.”

“Deception, sir! You cannot suppose that Miss Lowther was aware of the existence of this later will?”

“ You, as a lover, may not believe this, love being proverbially blind, but I, being an uninterested observer, and a plain seeing person, cannot believe otherwise.”

“ Good heavens, sir ! how can you entertain such an idea ? But you do not know Miss Lowther ;—only see Grace — only listen to her—”

“ I will not see her !” exclaimed his uncle with a vehemence startling to his hearer.

“ If you will not see her, at least make enquiries ;—question—sift—”

“ I need no enquiries ; my opinion is already formed on sufficient grounds,” interrupted his uncle, but speaking with less vehemence.

“ Indeed, sir, you have been misinformed, and are much mistaken. I would wager my life on Grace’s truth.”

“ And lose it as fools have done before who trusted to the truth of woman.”

“ You wrong her, sir ; I would trust her—”

“ And be deceived, as others have been,” said Mr. Rolleston, concluding the sentence in a hissing whisper, that shocked his wondering nephew.

“ I repeat, sir, you are mistaken : Grace is above deception. No sooner was she aware of this loss of fortune than she wrote to release me from my engagement.”

“ Then it is all as it should be, and you are free.”

“ Free, sir ?—only to bind myself the more completely. If my love did not bind me my honor would.”

“ Psha, Trevyllian ! your ideas are chimerical ;—romantic ;—not fit for every day use.”

“ My ideas of honor, sir, are such as I learnt from you ; and you would in your heart despise me could I act otherwise. You asked no questions concerning Miss Lowther’s fortune or connections ; you did not make your consent to our union depend on either ;—your

words were that you yielded to promote my happiness, and that you could rely on my choice. Her loss of fortune has not caused your change of mind ; and my happiness is still to be made or marred by your decision."

" I best promote that happiness by refusing my consent to a union, which you desire with the headstrong impetuosity of blinded love," said Mr. Rolleston harshly.

" Say not so, my dear uncle ; without your sanction, I cannot be quite blessed :—do not then withhold that consent for which I plead so earnestly. You have long watched over me with the care and affection of a parent ;—still look upon me as a child—still let me look to you as to a father."

" I desire no more, Trevyllian," said his uncle quickly, and in a more gentle tone. " Shew me the love and obedience of a son :—give up this girl, who shall never enter my doors, and I will be to you all that the fondest, and most careful father could be."

“In all else I will obey you,” exclaimed Trevyllian, touched almost to tears by his softened manner;—“but in this—”

“This is the only point on which I require obedience,” interrupted Mr. Rolleston, some portion of sternness mingling with his affectionate entreaty. “Ask aught beside, even to the half of my fortune, and it shall be granted freely—readily.”

“My dear, kind uncle! I am grateful—truly grateful!—but why is this? Your very offer proves that you are not mercenary. Keep all your wealth; I only ask your blessing on our union.”

“You shall not wed her!” cried Mr. Rolleston fiercely.

“There is more in this than the mere question of fortune,” said Trevyllian, looking keenly into his uncle’s glaring eyes.

“Who told you that, boy?” questioned Mr. Rolleston, starting back and drawing up his stately figure to its full height.

“There is ! there is !—you cannot deceive me,” exclaimed the excited Trevyllian. “I read it in your quivering lip—I see it in your half averted face. Speak ! speak ! know you aught of Grace Lowther that should bar our union ? On your honor as a man, a christian, have you heard aught against her ? Speak ! in mercy speak ! if you would have me retain my senses,” he continued still more passionately, whilst his cheek turned of an ashy hue, and he leant against the mantel-piece for support.

“Ask no more !” replied Mr. Rolleston in a hollow whisper after a short pause, during which, to judge from the movements of his lips, he had made more than one attempt to speak.

“Yes ; I must ask ; and I must be answered,” cried the lover with increasing vehemence, shocked at an expression on Mr. Rolleston’s features which he had never seen there before.

“And who are you, that you should question me?” almost shrieked his uncle with a fearful rush of passion, at utter variance with his generally cold and stern demeanour. “Did I watch your youth only that you should sting me when grown to manhood? To whom do you owe that competence of which you boast, and which your black ingratitude would now employ to thwart my wishes—my commands? My care husbanded the little that could be snatched from the ruin of your spendthrift father. My arms sheltered—my lips taught you, when there was none beside who cared for you. Your mother, deluded by love or vanity, wedded against my will and judgment:—she died broken hearted. Follow not her example, lest you share her fate. Away boy! or let me pass, and as you value my regard never again recur to this subject;—you have yet to learn how I can hate.”

“Heaven forbid that I should ever learn it!

As yet, I have known but your love, for which I am most grateful."

"Prove this by obedience."

"On all other points, sir; even in this, if you could prove;—but you cannot;—shame on me that I should doubt her for one moment!" he exclaimed his pale cheek flushing at the thought. "I put it to you as my uncle, whom I have so long known and respected; I put it to you as a man, who would let no consideration tempt him to an untruth, have you heard aught against Grace Lowther?"

Mr. Rolleston looked into his nephew's anxious face, and then on the ground; but made no reply, though the muscles of his mouth worked with some strong emotion.

"In pity to my agony, speak I implore you!" pleaded Trevyllian, laying his hand on his arm.

"Play not the lover to me, boy," cried Mr. Rolleston angrily, shaking off his hand. "Your

mistress may be pure as unsunned snow ;—a perfect chrysolite, for aught that I have heard to the contrary ;—if a woman can be either.”

“ She is ! she is ! and I do not deserve her for that instant’s doubt,” exclaimed the triumphant lover. “ Admitting this, sir, let me entreat—”

“ I will listen to no entreaties—I will hearken to no arguments. Was there ever lover who did not deem his idol the wonder of the world ? And how long think you does such delusion last ?—With some few, perhaps, till the end of the honeymoon. But this is not the question,” he added more gently, “ Will you wring the heart of him who cradled you an orphan in his arms, and let his love cling round you till a parting, or a quarrel would be as a withering blight on his remaining years, taking away the sap from the stately forest tree that sheltered you ? You spoke of gratitude—now is the time to shew it.”

“ My dear uncle, I am most grateful. But

why should there be a parting?—why dissension? Why object to my union with Miss Lowther, since you can bring no accusation against her?”

“I have told you, boy, that I will not be questioned. Wed not!—or wed with my curse upon your head! It is for you to decide between Thomas Rolleston, and Grace Lowther;—between your uncle and a stranger,—between the watchful care of many years, and the fleeting fancy of a day, or week! The choice rests with you,” he added folding his arms, and standing proudly before his nephew.

“Say not so!” exclaimed Trevyllian in strong emotion. “If my peace is dear to you, put me not to so hard a trial.”

“Choose!” repeated Mr. Rolleston sternly.

“I cannot choose, sir; I will not believe you in earnest.”

“When was I given to jesting?” questioned his uncle scornfully. “I am in earnest—I am

resolved, Decide like a man !—waver not like a child ! Yet, stay ! I admit the decision may be painful, and therefore condescend to plead with you, — Trevyllian, — my nephew,—the child of my care. I do not command as a guardian, I entreat as a friend—a father. Can you hear me thus plead unmoved ?” he added placing his hand affectionately on the young man’s shoulder, whilst his lip quivered, and his keen gaze softened into tenderness.

“ No, sir, not unmoved !” replied Trevyllian with a faltering voice. “ Formerly your commands would have been—”

“ Ha ! Because the law leaves you your own master in a few days then, you would brave me,” interrupted Mr. Rolleston sternly.

“ Not brave you, my dear uncle, only appeal to your justice—your affection.”

“ I will listen to no appeal,” cried Mr. Rolleston with another burst of passion. “ Will you leave my old age desolate, and wed with my curse upon your head ? or will you give

up the acquaintance of a few months, and be my son—my heir?”

Trevyllian was silent.

“Speak!” continued Mr. Rolleston still more sternly, grasping his arm. “Will you give up Grace Lowther?”

“Never, sir! my affection, my honor, alike forbid it. Let who will be your heir; but still let me be your son.”

“No son of mine, rebellious boy!” exclaimed Mr. Rolleston, dashing away the arm he had grasped, and giving loose to the fury so hardly repressed before. “No son of mine! Alien! and more than alien—foe!—Away! away! you sleep not beneath this roof again. Henceforth you are an outcast from the home of your fathers’—a stranger to your mother’s only brother. Away! away! I would not look upon your face again.” he repeated waving him off as he would have approached to take his hand.

“Speak not so hard a doom! Pause a little!

give me time—give us both time,” pleaded Trevyllian.

“Time for what?” asked Mr. Rolleston scornfully, “Do you purpose change?—No boy! I read your heart:—and I—I change not as you think and hope. Go wed this girl, and let my curse—”

“Stop, stop, sir! say not that, I implore you, by your former love.”

“That love is turned to hate.—You brave my wrath, yet fear its utterance. Well, be it so! I need not speak my malison, you feel it in your heart already. The remembrance of my parting words will linger to your dying hour. We meet no more,” he added towering into a lofty grandeur as he reached the door, and stalking past his nephew, who would fain have stayed him, with a withering look of fearful power.

Trevyllian listened to his departing steps with some slight hope that he would yet relent; but when he heard him enter his study,

and lock the door, he sank into a chair, and covering his face with his hands, as if to shut out that scathing look, gave way to the grief that oppressed him.

His face was still buried in his hands, his thoughts still dwelling on the parting words and glance of that stern man whom he had loved so well, when the opening of the door startled and roused him. His eye lit up with sudden hope, as Mr. Rolleston's valet handed him a note. He read, then crushed it in his hands.

"Your carriage is at the door, sir, as you ordered; but my master bade me ask whether you would want it to-night, or not," said the valet in a cold, measured tone, it being his pride and pleasure to ape Mr. Rolleston.

"Yes: this very moment!" exclaimed Tre-vyllian, rushing past the astonished valet, and springing into the carriage without question, or command.

As the door was closing, he called to the

butler, "Tell my uncle—tell Mr. Rolleston—but no," he added, checking himself abruptly ; — "tell him nothing ;—I will write."

"You have now had an hour to consider. Promise to see Grace Lowther no more, and we meet to-morrow as we have ever met till to-day. Wed her, and you are no longer nephew of mine ;—a stranger shall be my heir. To stay or to depart remains with yourself ; but your decision must be prompt and final : I am not to be turned or trifled with.

"Yours, or not yours, as you decide,

"THOMAS ROLLESTON."

"So writes my uncle," said Trevyllian repeating the contents of the note to himself as he sank back in the chariot ; then hastily leaning forward he tore the crumpled paper into a

thousand atoms, and flung them out of the window.

“ I have chosen, as he desired ; I was his grateful nephew—not his crouching slave. A wife’s love must compensate for an uncle’s harshness ; Grace shall be mine within the month.”

Trevyllian wrote in defence of his choice ending with a touching appeal to his uncle’s affection ; but the letter was returned unopened, the re-direction being in Mr. Rolleston’s hand, whose solicitor informed him a few days after, by that gentleman’s desire, that all the accounts during his minority were ready for his inspection and signature. Within the month, as he had said, Grace Lowther became his bride, unconscious of having been the cause of estrangement between the relatives, though aware that they had parted, never again to meet as friends. His own twelve thousand pounds, and his wife’s three, placed, by the advice of Rawdon, who shewed the warmest

concern in his friend's happiness, where a greater interest could be procured than in the funds, furnished means sufficient to gratify his humble wishes. Trevyllian had no ambition, no desire for shew ; and in the devoted affection of his gentle, and lovely wife, almost forgot his alienation from his uncle. The birth of his first child, a daughter, was announced to Mr. Rolleston at Trevyllian's request, by Mr. Bolton, the excellent rector, who took this opportunity of urging, with christian earnestness, a reconciliation, for which the nephew was still anxious.

Mr. Rolleston listened in haughty politeness with only an occasional gesture of impatience, then answered briefly.

“ As Henry Trevyllian kept his resolution, so will ' Thomas Rolleston keep his :—I have no nephew—he has no uncle :—let him beware how he attempts to force himself into my presence. Permit me to add, Mr. Bolton, that this subject must never again be named.”

The words and manner were too decided to leave any hope of a speedy change, and Mr. Bolton, though still desirous of accomplishing a reconciliation, deemed it most prudent to be silent as requested, or rather commanded, till that haughty spirit should be softened, or subdued.

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CHAPTER II.

“NINE yeras to-day since we were married,” said Trevyllian, passing his arm round his wife’s waist as she entered the breakfast room at Beechley cottage, imprinting a kiss upon her ruby lips. “I have not repented of my choice;—what says my Grace?”

“That she is very happy!” she replied gazing upon him with a fond wife’s pride and love. “See, I have not forgotten the day,” she added presenting him with an elegant souvenir.

“Nor have I,” he remarked, throwing round her neck a chain of beautiful workmanship, and then stepping back a space to admire the effect. “Truly, fair Grace, you look so lovely that I must enact the lover once again ; I am still under thirty, you know,” he added gaily, kissing the cheek that glowed as it had done in former days.

“What would Captain Rawdon say if he saw or heard this galantry?” asked his blushing wife.

“He would say, that we were as great simpletons as ever,” replied the laughing Trevyllian. “Now I remember he was to come to-day and claim his wager, having betted that we should fall out and omit or forget our usual exchange of presents ; he shall certainly pay, and the whole be expended on you, sweet wife.”

“As an acknowledgment that to my sweetness alone is to be attributed our not hav-

ing fallen out?' questioned Mrs. Trevyllian archly.

"No, only because, being of the weaker sex, you require encouragement in virtue, whilst my more manly mind can do right without the hope or promise of reward."

"Oh for the vanity of man!" exclaimed his wife, holding up her hands in pretended astonishment. "But I hear the children in the garden; and they being of the weaker sex must have their rewards too, I suppose: the books are ready."

Mrs. Trevyllian approached the window as she spoke, followed by her husband, and both gazed with delight on the scene, and then on each other.

Immediately before them lay a sloping lawn tastefully decorated with shrubs and flowers; beyond a gravel terrace, overlooking a fine extent of wooded country. The spring and summer flowers had passed away, but those of

autumn were still in the freshness of their beauty. The dahlias and the chrysanthemums, blended their various hues in rich profusion, and the china roses with their delicate pink peeped in at the windows, round which they clustered, in prodigal abundance. A fresh, invigorating air played among the shrubs; and occasionally a ruder wind, the note of approaching winter, swept over the more lofty trees, followed by a shower of leaves, brown, yellow, scarlet; whilst in the blue sky above rode a bright sun, shedding a glow on all beneath, and preventing the chilly feel too often attending an autumn morning. But it was neither on the sun, nor the azure sky, nor the trees, nor the flowers, nor the distant prospect, though each served to heighten the beauty of the scene, that the gaze of Trevillian and his wife was fixed in delighted admiration. They looked at—they only saw their children, two little girls playing on the terrace; now chasing each other with childish

glee and grace, then snatching at the whirling autumn leaves; and anon mocking the grave demeanour of grown up men and women, enacting all the courtesies of visiting.

Sallow and sickly, without a tolerable feature, but her eyes, and even those looking weak and bleared from her recent illness, the youngest could boast of little personal attraction. No artist would have wished to sketch her—no honest person, however polite, could have pronounced her pretty, (a blunt one would at once have called her a fright); and perhaps neither father nor mother absolutely considered the little Grace a beauty, but there was an intelligence, an expression of sweetness and generosity in those irregular features, which though strangers might have failed to perceive, it made her in their opinion almost as interesting, and quite as dear, as her elder sister, Julia, one of the most lovely little creatures that mortal ever looked upon. To a skin of dazzling, yet life like whiteness, per-

fect features of the grecian cast, large, soft, grey eyes with lashes that lay thick and long on her peachy cheek when she looked down, and golden hair that fell in glossy curls over her snowy neck, she united a figure of almost perfect symmetry. The ladies, with the exception of one or two rival mothers, called her a love! and a darling! whilst the gentlemen half smothered her with kisses, talking nonsense about her conquests in after years. Strangers stopped to speak to or look after her; and the servants and friends predicted a splendid match for the young beauty, aware how much the loveliness of person outweighs the loveliness of mind in general estimation. Julia Trevyllian was a beauty! there was no denying it; and, unhappily, there was no possibility of preventing her from hearing it three times on the average every working day, and probably six on the sunday, when she went to church, and caught the praises of the villagers. Her father and mother did all they could to

counteract the effects of such constant flattery and hoped they had succeeded :—alas, what will not parents hope !

At the moment when Mr. and Mrs. Trevyllian looked from the window, Grace, tired with a run, was leaning against a garden seat, whilst Julia was amusing herself and her sister by waltzing, as she called it, with a black spaniel. The grave looks of the patient dog, as the lovely Julia whirled him round and round, caused bursts of laughter from the wearied Grace, and the fair waltzer, who seemed scarcely like a thing of earth, so light, so sylphlike were her motions.

“ Do make Frolic dance for papa and mamma to see,” cried Grace, clapping her hands with childish glee, at the last splendid pirouette of the spaniel and his young mistress. “ Oh, there they are at the window ! Let us run and give them our nosegays, and have kisses in return,” she continued, looking towards the house, and snatching up the

flowers so carefully gathered, and so nicely arranged.

“ Yes, let us make haste and get the presents that they always give us on their wedding day,” replied the still panting Julia, taking her sister’s hand, who had waited for a moment that they might reach the house together.

“ See here ! we picked them the first thing,” cried the eager children at once, holding up the flowers to their happy parents, whose eyes filled with tears of joy as they bent down to kiss them.

“ And now you expect the usual presents as a reward, I suppose, for your pretty nosegays,” said Mr. Trevyllian.

“ Yes, papa !” cried Julia joyfully.

“ We should have picked them all the same, without that,” said Grace looking down with a crimsoned cheek, fearing that a reproach for interested motives was couched beneath her father’s gaiety.

“ I am sure you would,” replied Mr. and Mrs. Trevyllian together, touched by the sensitive delicacy of her affection.

“ I meant no rebuke, my little Gracey,” added her father kissing her tenderly.

The child made no reply, but clinging round his neck hid her face in his bosom. Of delicate health even from her birth, if less lovely than her sister she had, for her age, more thought ; and her late illness, whilst it had rendered her more dependant on others, had also made her more sensitive to, and more grateful for, the attentions bestowed upon her. Her parents feared she was too sensitive—had too keen a perception of slight or kindness to pass happily through this changing life, where joys and sorrows alternate so quickly ; but this sensitiveness, so unusual in children of her years, might be only the effect of lingering weakness ; better health and judicious culture might moderate it sufficiently to enable

her to endure the pains and penalties of womanhood.

“ Oh, what pretty books !” exclaimed both children, each looking with eager and admiring eyes at the one in her own hand, and then as eagerly and admiringly on the one held by her sister.

“ What a very pretty picture !” cried Julia opening her large, grey eyes in beautiful wonder and delight at a print in Grace’s book.

“ If you like it better than yours, dear, you shall have it, for you should have the prettiest things,” whispered little Grace, putting her arm round her sister’s neck. “ I dare say papa and mamma would let us change.”

“ No, indeed, dear Grace, I did not mean that ; and it is you who should have the prettiest things for you are always so good and patient, and don’t mind when I tease you,” replied the blushing Julia, kissing her sister.

“ Besides, I dare say my pictures are quite a pretty, only I have not had time to look at them.”

“ You will find little difference, except that there are harder words in one than the other, to suit little girls of eight, and five years old : we love our children equally,” observed Mr. Trevyllian, who had overheard the whispered offer and reply. “ I trust you will always be equally willing, each to make a sacrifice for the sake of the other,”

No sisters could be more sincerely attached. Grace never envied the beauty of Julia, though the injudicious remarks of nursemaids and strangers had made her perfectly aware of the striking difference in their personal appearance ; whilst Julia, if sometimes a little wayward and tyrannical to others, was ever gentle and considerate to Grace.

Had it pleased the worshipful, the House of Commons, amongst their numerous commissions to issue one for ascertaining which dwell-

ing in his majesty's dominions (for we were not then governed by a fair young queen, to whom all look with fervent hope, and devoted love) contained the greatest portion of human happiness, few, if any, could have competed on that point with Beechley Cottage on this fresh, autumn morning. A bright sun shone without, a bright fire glowed within ; the urn hissed with a happy sound, and Trevyllian and his wife glanced with chastened delight first on each other, and then on their children ; each little girl with her new book cuddled close beside her, into which she occasionally peeped, and Frolic seated between them, receiving with great gravity and decorum the attentions lavished on him by his young mistresses.

“ Oh, mamma ! you should have seen Frolic dance ; he looked so funny ! ” said Grace, in the lisping tones of childhood, twining his long silken curls between her slender fingers.

“ However funny it might seem to you,

Grace, I doubt if he found much pleasure in his waltz."

"Don't you think he liked it mamma?" questioned Grace with earnest gravity.

"I cannot say that I think he did," replied her mother, smiling at her simplicity.

"Poor, dear Frolic! then he shan't be asked to dance any more," said the affectionate child, kissing the dog by way of atonement; an endearment with which the spaniel appeared highly delighted, wagging his tail, and endeavouring to return the compliment.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Julia, flinging back her beautiful curls with a graceful motion of the head; "Frolic must not give himself airs, but dance when I choose. Don't I feed him, and pet him, and love him? And would not little Harry Sotherby" (who, by the way, was larger than herself) "be glad to dance with me any day?"

"Yes, but then, if we do feed him, Julia, he fetches and carries for us; and lets us pull

him about as we like, yet never bites ; and I love him too well to vex him."

"A dance will do him good sometimes," cried the little beauty, with another toss of the head. "But look, mamma ! here is a carriage—and coming so fast !" she continued, running to the window, and wondering with childish wonder who it could be.

"Ah, Rawdon ! just come in time to pay your debt," exclaimed Trevyllian, advancing to meet his friend, the sole occupant of the carriage coming so fast. "We have neither quarrelled nor omitted the presents as you predicted."

"You deserve no praise on that score ; a South Sea savage, ay, or even a South Sea whale, would be subdued by such charms," replied Rawdon gallantly, bowing to his friend's still lovely wife. "I wish all debts could be paid as easily and willingly," he added wringing Mrs. Trevyllian's hand with a force of which he was unconscious, shocked

at the change which a few days might produce in the lot of those who were now all smiles and joy.

“ I agree with you in wishing that all were as honest,” observed Trevyllian gaily.

“ Honest ! There is no such thing as honesty in the world !” replied Rawdon with a bitterness of tone, which attracted the attention of his friend.

“ There is hospitality, at any rate, so come and deposit your hat in the hall, and then we will give you a good breakfast,” said Trevyllian as gaily as before, not to alarm his wife. “ What has happened, Rawdon ?” he demanded abruptly, as soon as the breakfast room door was closed behind them. “ You have not come merely to do honour to my wedding day.”

“ You may well say that, Trevyllian ; for my news is by no means fitted for such a time.”

“ Has any evil befallen my uncle ?” asked Trevyllian anxiously.

“ No. A six months fit of the gout, at the least to the old curmudgeon !” exclaimed Rawdon in vexation. “ But for him this would never have come to pass ;—and yet that is unjust : I should blame myself more than another ;—but who does that in this world ? And who, like a vain glorious fool, would wish to be singular ?

‘ Condemned to drudge,
Without a second and without a judge.’

Here am I quoting poetry like a madman, instead of talking plain prose like a sane, sober man of business. The fact is, Trevyllian, that you ought instantly to hear my news, and act upon it, but I am so bewildered, that I can think of nothing by way of preparation.”

“ I need no preparation. You say that no evil has befallen my uncle, and my wife and children are well ;—all else, with God’s blessing, I can bear.”

“ I wish I could !—but listen, for there is no time to lose. Downing, after defrauding many, fearful of discovery has fled with his dishonest gains, hoping to escape to America. If we could stop him he might be made to refund. I have had secret intelligence that he is lying *perdu*—in Liverpool, waiting for a vessel : and hurried hither that we might seek him together. That I should have persuaded you for the sake of higher interest, to lend your money to such a wretch ! Yet all thought him wealthy and honorable, and though scheming, so judicious in that scheming, as to be certain of success.”

“ No blame can rest with you, Rawdon,” observed Trevyllian warmly, hiding his own pangs to save his friend. By this one stroke his children, and his wife were beggars.

“ And your own fortune, Rawdon,—where is that ?”

“ All gone together ; but I can think only of you now. I have my pay, and a few hun-

dreds left to purchase promotion ; and have neither wife nor children.”

“ Ah, Rawdon, there it is !” said Trevyllian, grasping his friend’s arm, and turning deadly pale. “ If I stood alone in the world, it would be little ;—but something may be done yet. In five minutes, I shall be ready to start for Liverpool. Go into breakfast, and send Grace to me ; I am better now ;” and the colour came back into his ghastly cheek as he spoke.

“ Can you not conceal it from Mrs. Trevyllian for the present ?”

“ No ; she would imagine worse than the truth.”

“ She could scarcely do that. How will she bear the intelligence ?”

“ As a wife, and a christian should. Doubt her not ; only banish that alarming look, and say that I wish to speak with her.”

“ Well, Miss Julia, when are you to be my little wife ?” asked Rawdon as he swallowed a

hasty breakfast after having sent Mrs. Trevillian to her husband.

“ I shall not be your little wife at all,” cried the beauty with a toss of the head. “ You have not brought me the large doll you promised.”

“ You will not be so cruel as to refuse me, Julia ?”

“ Yes, but I will though.—Harry Sotherby sent me such a pretty little kitten ;” added the incipient coquette.

“ So Harry has cut me out. What will become of me ?” said Rawdon cheated of a smile, despite his anxiety, by the baby beauty’s airs.

“ I will be your little wife, if you like ; you used to tell me such pretty stories when I was ill and could not walk,” whispered Grace, creeping closer to him, and looking upon him with the utmost pity.

“ You are a dear, good little creature,” exclaimed Rawdon, taking her on his knee,

touched by her words and manner; such a beautiful mingling of gratitude, kindness, and humility.

“ I forgot you had been so kind to dear Gracey, so I will be your wife too,” cried Julia, forgetting all her coquetry in her affection for her sister.

“ Some gentlemen are so rude as to consider one wife more than enough,” remarked Mrs. Trevyllian entering at the moment, and making an attempt at gaiety, though her voice faltered as she spoke.

“ Can you forgive me, my dear madam, for having introduced Downing to your husband ?” exclaimed Rawdon starting up.

“ It would be unjust and ungrateful to blame you for advice by which we have profited so long. I am truly sorry that you too are a sufferer,” replied Mrs. Trevyllian with friendly warmth.

“ Thank you ! thank you ! You are an angel !” exclaimed Rawdon overcome by the

fortitude with which she endured her loss, and the kindness of her manner towards himself, by whose advice that loss had been occasioned.

“ Nothing so sublime ; only an anxious wife and mother. You must keep up Henry’s spirits should you fail in your endeavours to recover the lost property. Tell him—convince him—that whilst he and my children are left, I can bear poverty with cheerfulness. He feels for me far more than for himself.”

“ And so he should. You may depend on my doing all that the most zealous friend can do ; your kindness only makes me feel a greater wretch. You may forgive me—but I can never forgive myself.”

Rawdon was true to his word ; he did all that the most zealous friend could do ; but that was little.

His information had been incorrect ; Downing had sailed from another port, and before the friends reached Liverpool was some way across the Atlantic. One of his eager creditors

followed, but no further tidings could be obtained of the delinquent.

“Where is Henry?” asked Mrs. Trevyllian of Captain Rawdon a few days after, going to the door to meet her guest, seeing that he approached the house alone and with a lagging step.

“He is well—quite well—on my honor,” he replied with quickness, seeing that her cheek grew paler, and paler. “Business which I will explain has detained him; but I bring a letter.”

“Do not try to deceive me,” said the anxious wife. “I read some fresh misfortune in your eyes.”

“I certainly have the most hang dog countenance in the world, and am the most miserable and unfortunate of human beings; for my face always tells just what it should not tell, whilst my tongue is obliged to confirm the tale. And here are you fainting, because I relate my news so badly,” he added half distracted with vexation

as he supported the trembling Mrs. Trevyllian to a chair. "What an idiot I am!" he continued fumbling in vain to untie her cap to give her air, calling on the servants at the same time to come to his assistance, by every name but those really belonging to them.

"Only tell me that Henry is well—quite well," said Mrs. Trevyllian, a burst of tears having saved her from utter insensibility.

"Quite well, on my honor!" replied Rawdon delighted at her recovery, which he was induced to attribute to his having torn off her cap, finding that he could not untie it.

"Then where is he? and what has happened? I can bear to hear all now; but do not make me more anxious by delay."

"I will hesitate no longer then, though I would as soon be hanged as have to tell you," replied Rawdon with considerable emotion. "You already know by letter that Downing has escaped with the sum acquired by his wild and sometimes dangerous speculations, carried

on with other people's money under a sober, and business like seeming. This is an occurrence to be deeply deplored ; but unhappily I have to relate that which is still more distressing. You are aware, I believe, that my friend became one of Darby's securities, when that gentleman entered into partnership with Mr. Wood, under the conviction that he should never be called on to pay the four thousand pounds for which he became his surety. This apparently reasonable conviction I am grieved to say, has proved unfounded. After losing all his own, and much of his partner's money at hazard, Darby, unable to endure the pangs of remorse, has committed suicide and his securities have been called on to make good his deficiencies."

"Where is Henry?" demanded Mrs. Trevyllian eagerly.

"In prison," replied Rawdon in a faltering voice, finding that he must give an answer.

The devoted wife, uttering a cry of horror, sank back in her chair.

“Do not hate me! I have done—I will do all I can,” cried the warm-hearted Rawdon in great emotion.

“I do not blame—I do not doubt you,” faltered Mrs. Trevyllian, checking her sobs.

“I said you were more than woman,” cried Rawdon, the tears rolling down his own cheeks for sympathy. “As if one loss was not enough, but that jade Fortune must bring another on its back.”

“Let us not rail at Fortune, Captain Rawdon,” said Mrs. Trevyllian with a gentle gravity. “Our sufferings arise from our own sins and carelessness, or are the inflictions of a higher power; the just punishment of guilt, or the chastening of a Heavenly Father, who corrects in mercy. Instead of deploring the past, let us consider what will be best for the future. My husband, my children, and myself are beggars! I see—I feel all this! but surely some-

thing can be done for his release? They will not detain him when confinement can only prevent his obtaining the means of payment."

"Alas, my dear Mrs. Trevyllian; for the present, I fear he must remain a prisoner. Conscious of his utter inability to pay, Trevyllian would not accept of bail even if it could be obtained, and the few hundreds, which is all that Downing's villany has left me, are not enough to answer the demand, though all I have shall be at his disposal to repair to the utmost the injury caused by my advice."

"Not so, Captain Rawdon. No blame can attach to you;—you have suffered with us but must not suffer for us; do not believe that we have grown so selfish in our poverty. Mr. Darby has a brother, has he not—childless, and affluent?"

"And add to that, cold, selfish, and unfeeling," said Rawdon, interrupting her. "He has been appealed to, and in vain."

"Alas! alas! what can be done?" cried Mrs.

Trevyllian, wringing her hands. “If I could but see Henry at liberty, he has health and strength ; and we would strive, slave, till all was paid. Perhaps my aunt might be induced to advance the money.”

“If you mean Mrs. Gunning, I grieve to say that your hope is vain. I obtained an interview and related every circumstance, pleading your cause with all the warmth of friendly zeal.”

“Well, and with what success? Surely, she could not have heard your tale unmoved,” said Mrs. Trevyllian, seeing that he hesitated.

“Not exactly—she was much distressed ; but must have time to consider and consult Mr. Gunning. I called again, and she had consulted with her husband. Being only your mother’s half-sister, so much could not be expected from her, as if she had been whole blood with Mrs. Lowther, and they had been brought up together. Four thousand pounds was a large sum—they had no ready money at

command ; and even if they had, an advance would only benefit Mr. Wood, not you or your children. Some time hence they would be ready to contribute the little in their power to promote the comfort of their half-niece, and her girls ; but to appear as Mr. Trevyllian's friends at present, would only make his creditor more inexorable, supposing that his relations would pay his debts ; and so they bowed and smiled me out of their splendid drawing-room, glittering with bijouterie and or-molu, not failing to ring the bell that I might be attended through the hall by two servants in gorgeous liveries. We must not depend on the Gunnings."

Mrs. Trevyllian was silent, and her sobs almost broke the heart of the sensitive Rawdon, who stammered out some confused attempts at consolation. One of these unintelligible sentences at length attracted his hearer's attention, and she looked up with a sudden gleam of hope, "When convinced of Henry's poverty, surely

Mr. Wood, considering the hardship of his case, will no longer detain him."

Rawdon shook his head. "Roguery abounds so much, that it is difficult for honest men to obtain belief; and Wood persists in thinking that Mr. Rolleston will come forward on such an occasion."

"I had forgotten Mr. Rolleston: he cannot resist our appeal," exclaimed Mrs. Trevyllian, starting up with sudden energy.

Poor Rawdon was in utter despair, as he thought of the canoe,—his own unceremonious exit from Rolleston Court, and its owner's forbidding aspect, and unforgiving temper.

"You will go with us, will you not," asked Mrs. Trevyllian, never heeding his dismay. "The quarrel was long since, and time has, I trust, subdued his anger."

"It is a step that requires consideration," stammered Rawdon.

"Consideration—what do you mean? Shall

I not appeal to my husband's uncle, because nine years ago he banished his nephew for a trifling disgust? Rich, and with none to inherit his wealth, he will not refuse us some small portion of his abundance at such a moment. We ask not a gift—we ask only a loan.”

“ You do not know Mr. Rolleston, my dear Mrs. Trevyllian; he never quarrels for trifles, and never forgets an offence. He has refused to hold any communication with my friend in person or by letter.”

“ He did so formerly, but now—”

“ Believe me, my dear madam, you will find him unchanged—unchangeable. At my request, a friend of Mr. Rolleston's, that is, if he has a friend, mentioned your husband's unhappy situation and pleaded his cause as strongly as he dared. The reply was brief and peremptory,—‘ Trevyllian choose his course and must abide the consequences.’—I should have spared you the pain of hearing this re-

fusal, had you not proposed a visit to Rolleston Court."

"Such might have been his answer to a comparative stranger, but he could not look unmoved on his nephew's wife and children," observed Mrs. Trevyllian, unwilling to relinquish her sole remaining hope.

"He is the only man who could," replied Captain Rawdon, as he gazed on the anxious wife, and thought of her interesting children.

"We will not think him unlike other men, or believe that he can hear untouched the prayers of childhood," said Mrs. Trevyllian, catching at his words as indicating some little hope of softening Mr. Rolleston. "Let us at least make the endeavour; and do not damp my courage with that mistrustful look."

Rawdon's look was certainly most discouraging as he said:—"May I ask if you are aware of the ground of quarrel between my friend and his uncle?"

"Some sudden caprice, I believe, on Mr.

Rolleston's part with which Henry declined complying; but at my husband's request, I made no enquiries, as the subject was evidently painful."

"Not being aware of the cause of quarrel, my dear madam, you might by some inadvertent word widen the breach," cried Rawdon, thinking this a triumphant argument against the visit.

Struck with his manner Mrs. Trevyllian looked keenly on the speaker; and as his cheek flushed, hers grew more pale.

"Tell me! tell me truly! was I the cause of this disagreement? For the first time the idea has come across me, and I remember now it was immediately after my change of fortune. Do not try to frame an answer that may deceive me:—I read the truth in your silence. Kind, noble, generous Trevyllian! never has a word escaped him that could lead me to suspect the fact. And yet how much he must

have yielded for my sake," exclaimed the wife with a burst of affection.

"I deeply regret that your questions—" began Rawdon in great embarrassment.

"Have elicited the truth you would say," continued the lady. "Do not regret this; it is due to my husband that his generous delicacy should be revealed; and there is much joy mingled with my pain. Before I loved him—now I could almost worship him;—not for nine years to hint one murmur or upbraiding! What is the glory of the statesman, or the warrior to such unselfish tenderness? A life devoted to his happiness cannot repay him."

Rawdon listened in surprise to this sudden burst from one usually so calm and gentle; and as he looked upon her, radiant with the beauty of the heart's noblest feelings, love and gratitude,—with her hands clasped and her eyes filled with tears, he considered Trevyllian more than repaid by the devotion of such a woman; nay, he believed that could Mr. Rol-

leston have seen her at that moment even his stern temper would have been subdued.

“ I must shew myself worthy of his regard, and not waste in tears the energies that should be spent in action,” she continued, after a few minutes’ silence. “ Did Mr. Rolleston object only to my want of fortune ?”

“ He made no other objection to his nephew.”

“ One more question ; and you must answer candidly. Do you think that my visit would incense Mr. Rolleston more, or did you only oppose my wishes lest our meeting should lead to a painful disclosure ?”

“ The latter was my only motive. Mr. Rolleston’s enmity, I should imagine, beyond increase ; and he might consider your appeal as a fresh triumph, which would not displease him.”

“ Then I go to my husband’s uncle,” said Mrs. Trevyllian firmly.

“ Never having seen Mr. Rolleston, you

cannot guess what you may have to encounter."

" I fear no harshness to myself ; I only fear lest my appeal should fail ; but if deaf to my prayers, he cannot resist the entreaties of my innocent children ; they at least have not offended him ; and we will go hoping that He who rules the hearts of men will soften his."

CHAPTER III.

IN the afternoon of the succeeding day, a travelling carriage entered the park at Rolleston, to the great surprise of the porter, who rarely admitted such an object; and as it passed up the stately avenue a lady leant from the window with an eager, anxious look; but that look did not brighten into hope as she gazed around.

Who shall account for the freaks of the imagination?—the force of associations?—the sudden sympathies and antipathies of the

human heart?—or the power of presentiment—that mental second sight? One moment the spirit is light and buoyant as a winged bird flitting through the air; now hovering over fragrant flowers—then darting upwards into the azure sky with a bold and rapid flight;—the next the spirit lies broken—crushed,—the victim of the body, or of thought. The buoyant bird is bowed to earth—its plumage soiled—its gay wings broken;—it may not soar again. Time after time will these dark forebodings, these gloomy shadowings of the things to come, prove but false prophets; yet time after time will they hush the joyous laugh—dim the bright eye—dispel the rainbow dream of hope; and chain the spirit down to dungeon gloom.

But a few short minutes since and Mrs. Trevyllian's hopes of softening his uncle, and effecting her husband's immediate release had been little short of certainties; but as Rolleston Court appeared in view her certainty gave

place to doubt—her hopes to fears. Whether there really was any thing awful and chilling in the regularity of the stately avenue, and the heavy pile of building themselves, or whether they only conveyed that idea from being associated by Rawdon's description with the stern formality of the owner ; or whether her dread was only the natural consequence of her increased anxiety as the moment of the awful encounter drew near, Mrs. Trevyllian did not endeavour to ascertain ; all she knew, all she felt, was that despondency which if it precedes, almost as frequently occasions a failure. She looked at Rawdon, who had accompanied her, for reassurance ; but his feelings were the same, and he turned away. She looked at the children, and saw, or fancied, a gravity and gloom on their young countenances which she had never seen before. She thought of the awful man in whose presence she was so soon to stand, and her hopes, and her courage died away. Had the boon she

desired been for herself alone, that boon would have been unsought; but when her thoughts recurred to him, who, for her sake, had sacrificed the rich inheritance around, her drooping courage half revived. They had taken no servant lest an inadvertent betrayal of their names should prevent their admission; but the reply that Mr. Rolleston was at home, in answer to Rawdon's question, was given in a hesitating tone. The formal butler and footman who by a long attendance on their stately master had become, as Rawdon declared, little better than mechanised automatons, contrary to that gentleman's expectations, recognised him at once; and putting two and two together guessed the name of the lady; but as she declined being announced, and their orders only extended to a refusal of admittance to Mr. and Mrs. Trevyllian, they did not choose to go beyond those orders, and turn away a would be stranger.

“How could we know, Mrs. Hurst, that

the lady was the wife of my master's nephew ? And then she looked so sad, and so earnest ; and the little miss was such a beauty," said they afterwards to the old housekeeper.

" Courage, my dear Mrs. Trevyllian, and God be with you !" said Rawdon kindly, as after leading her across the hall, he left her to the further guidance of the servant, judging that his presence would not prove advantageous to her suit. Mr. Rolleston was seated in an arm chair by the fire in his splendid library. The book which he had taken up had been allowed unconsciously to drop on his knee, as the past with its long train of recollections sad and joyous rose in array before him. To judge from the expression of his features, the reign of hope had been as brief as the sunshine of an April day ; and storms had risen ere its dawn had brightened into joy. His eye had the same keen look which chilled from shewing no sympathy with mortal man—his lips the same stern compression ; but his brow was

more than usually contracted ;—its habitual frown deeper, darker ; whilst occasionally those searching eyes kindled into a gleam of vindictive triumph. The works of genius from all climes and ages—the thoughts that thrill, and words that burn, were all around him ; but his mind was not with them. The glowing visions of the enthusiast—the poet's beauteous dreams—the clear and convincing arguments of the philosopher—the subtle schemes of the mere politician—the elevated hopes of the real patriot—the stirring deeds of the warrior—were, at that moment, all as nought to him ;—one dark and gloomy passion ruled his soul, rolling its noisome flood over all things fair and lovely, whelming beneath its turbid waves, love, gentleness and pity.

The announcement of a lady roused him from his gloomy reverie, and as Mrs. Trevillian advanced leading her children, he started up, gazing on her with a keen, wild look ; then muttering some unintelligible words,

he sank back again into his easy chair, and sat for some moments silent, whilst varying expressions chased each other across his agitated countenance.

“Forgive me this abrupt intrusion,” said Mrs. Trevyllian, surprised at his strange emotion.

Mr. Rolleston raised his head at those low tones, so sweet, so sad ;—looked from her to her children ;—then, controlling all sign of feeling with a powerful effort, sat proudly erect, eyeing his visitors with that cold, stern gaze, from which the boldest turned away ; and from which his nephew’s wife and girls shrank awed and abashed.

“What does Mrs. Trevyllian seek of Thomas Rolleston, that she forces herself into his presence uninvited, and unwished for ?” he demanded with a haughty tone, as she stood trembling before him, neither asking her by word or look to take a seat, but rejoicing in her embarrassment.

“As you have guessed my name, so may you guess my purpose. I come to plead for pity—to ask your aid to free my husband, and your nephew from a prison. We are now destitute ;—with none to help us in our poverty. I do not ask a gift, I am no craving beggar that would live idly on another’s bounty ;—I do but ask a loan to set him free, and we will slave, yea, night and day till we can pay it back ; and bless you all the while. Look not thus coldly on my suit !—close not your ears against my prayers !” pleaded the trembling speaker still more fervently, clasping her hands, and bending towards him in her agony, for not a gleam of pity was in those keen, cold eyes. “He is your nephew—your only sister’s son ;—you loved him once—let him not languish in confinement ! Oh doom him not to perish of a broken heart ! The wide domain—the hoarded gold—the pomp of wealth—what are all these compared to the fond prayers and blessings of the

grateful heart—the tears that fall for joy—the following looks—the faltering tones, that say, —to you I owe this happiness?”

“Madam, your eloquence is vain; I know the worth of gratitude, or what men nickname such. I nursed the puling boy till he became a man; and then he turned and stung me. Your husband had his choice—the heir of Rolleston Court, or husband of Grace Lowther;—he chose the latter—and must abide his choice!—It would have shewn more delicacy in his wife had she not sought my presence, knowing that I preferred her absence.”

“Pardon this visit!” said Mrs. Trevyllian humbly, her hopes, if hopes they could be called, growing fainter and fainter as she listened to his cruel words, uttered in a tone so slow, so haughty, so distinct. “No lesser suffering should have tempted me to such displeasing boldness; but there is no one else in

this wide world, who has the will and power to assist us.”

“The poor do well to court and flatter their rich relatives; but those rich relatives may recollect the time when their advice was scorned—their care despised—and their affection trampled on.”

“Oh, say not so! even to this day your nephew’s strong affection is unchanged; and his first earthly hope has ever been a reconciliation.”

“I have no nephew, madam. I had one once; but he preferred a wife to his old worthless uncle; and since then I look upon him as a stranger.”

“And I was the unhappy cause of this,” exclaimed Mrs. Trevyllian, wringing her hands whilst her tears fell fast. “And yet till yesterday I never guessed this truth.”

“Indeed! I understood you had no secrets from each other: but were as one in mind

and heart; the wonder of the simple—the marvel of the learned, who had never seen such wedded happiness before. How am I to credit this concealment?”

“Your knowledge of my husband’s generous temper should teach you to believe it; I ask you not to credit that had I known this sooner I had never been his bride.”

“You do wisely in requiring no such belief,” said Mr. Rolleston interrupting her. “Twelve thousand pounds and a handsome person, with the fancy, vain as it was, that the old curmudgeon of an uncle would relent, was not such a very bad speculation for a girl who had less gold than beauty, and perhaps more wit than either; though she has shewn but little of the latter by seeking this interview at her husband’s command; an unwelcome visitor should expect nothing but denial and rebuke.”

“You wrong me, Mr. Rolleston; deeply wrong me by these suspicions; you wrong

Henry in supposing that wealth could weigh with me in comparison with his worth. You have been in the world—you have traced the hidden motives of the base and worldly, and your judgment has been warped and darkened by your knowledge of the few (the many if you will) but all are not alike the slaves and servants of self interest. Your knowledge of your nephew should have undeceived you—should have taught you that there are some with hearts the shrine of high and generous thoughts. On learning my loss of fortune, I wrote to free him from his engagement.”

“ Did you believe that he would avail himself of your generosity ?” asked Mr. Rolleston sarcastically.

“ No !” replied Mrs. Trevyllian firmly. “ He only acted as I expected in shewing himself more devoted, more anxious for our union ; but had I known that my consent to his wishes would have deprived him of his inheritance, and still worse in his estimation,

estranged him from his uncle, the choice should not have rested with him but with me ; —we had parted to meet no more.”

“ You would have acted wisely, madam, had you so done. Six hundred a year is very different to twelve thousand ; and now since even that is gone, you may well regret your decision ; your beauty might have procured a more splendid establishment, and you would not have been the first, and doubtless not the last, fair manœuvrer, who has veiled worldly views under the graceful mask of prudence or generosity.”

“ You must think of me as you will, for it would be vain to defend myself to one who wishes to believe me guilty, but think of your nephew as he deserves. Nine years have I been his wife, and never once has he hinted by word or look the sacrifice he made for me. Had I brought him millions instead of poverty his affection could not have been more devoted or more constant.”

“ You are truly fortunate, madam. Doubtless the devotion of the tender husband will grow still more sublime in a prison, and compensate for worldly cares. Yours is a most romantic tale ;—place it in the hands of some liberal publisher—it might make your fortune. But since this devoted husband did at length enlighten you as to the real cause of our estrangement, his marvellous affection should have spared you this degrading appeal ; and your wonderful discretion should have taught you its inutility :—as you have come, however, bear him this message. Say that I am unchanged—unchangeable. I predicted woe—and woe has come ;—I would have made him rich—he is a beggar !—he might have been the heir of Rolleston Court—he is the inmate of a prison ! I bade him, as he feared my curse, wed not Grace Lowther—he heard my words but did not heed them ! I have wealth—but it is not for him ;—he has no uncle—I no nephew. Now go and tell him all that I

have said, omitting not one single word ;—then see if the affection of nine years will not lose all its sweetness and turn sour ;—the eye that once looked love—glare hate ;—the tongue that used such honied words, speak bitter taunts.”

“ Oh, no ! I cannot tell him this !—recall that cruel speech,” exclaimed Mrs. Trevyllian, shrinking from his touch, for he had risen and grasped her arm as he spoke, looking into her face with an almost fiendish glare that made her shudder. “ Blame him not I entreat, I implore you ! Let all your anger rest on me, for I alone deserve it ! It was not from Henry that I learnt the evil I had caused him ;—it is not at his desire that I stand before you ;—he knows not of my being here. On me pour all your wrath and scorn ; I will not say one word in my defence ; but rob me not of his affection ! Yet even that rather than let him pine and starve. You look upon me with a stern un pitying gaze—you mock my

agony—you triumph in my tears! Do this!—do more!—say all that wrath can say to wound and crush, but let the pity you refuse to me be not denied to him and his. I am a wife, and plead for him whom you once loved;—one near to you in blood, the child you nurtured with a father's care—who held you in a father's reverence. If he once crossed your wishes it was that he believed his honor claimed the sacrifice.”

“It was no sacrifice—and that you know.—He loved you better than his uncle:—he preached of honour—but the lure was beauty.”

“I may have tempted him to woe unwittingly, but these, his children they have done no wrong. For them I plead:—they need a father's watchful care. Go not!” she continued as he turned to leave the room. “Even on my knees I do entreat your pity: Kneel—kneel my children and implore your uncle's blessing! Plead for your father—win

his pardon!—he cannot look upon your helpless innocence yet not be touched!—he cannot listen to your childish tones, and still be obdurate!”

“Ha! you and your children kneeling at my feet!—your fate depending on my will!—this is revenge!” exclaimed Mr. Rolleston, whilst a wild gleam shot from his eyes, and his thin lips were wreathed with a triumphant smile. “Come, children, where is the eloquence of which your mother boasts, that eloquence which shall subdue the stern and obdurate, and win your father Rolleston Court? You shall begin—your mother’s pride—fair beauty, with the locks of gold. Commence your tutored speech! What silent? Can you say nothing?” he continued still addressing Julia, who, cowering beneath his look, hid her face in her mother’s gown, and sobbed aloud.

“Psha, child! you do no credit to your mistress; your mother’s beauty but without your mother’s cunning wit. It rests with you

then, sickly brat," he added, extending his hand towards Grace. "Can you not coax and cozen me to be a puppet in your hands? Come, child, what would you say to me?"

"Go, away! you are a bad, wicked man, for making mamma cry," exclaimed the child boldly, and proudly, drawing back from his touch, and meeting his look, though the tears stood in her eyes as she spoke, and rolled down her pallid cheeks.

"You have a bold spirit, lisping little one, that needs the humbling touch of poverty; I could not answer it to my conscience to restore you to prosperity, till penury had crushed your pride," replied Mr. Rolleston his cheek flushing at her words; then turning to Mrs Trevyllian he continued in the same bitter tone. "Your children, madam, do honor to your tutoring; permit me to congratulate you on their eloquence."

"Heed not the simple words of childhood! Leave me not without one ray of hope!" ex-

claimed Mrs. Trevyllian wildly, making an effort to detain him.

“ Must I bear insult upon insult, and in my own house ?” cried Mr. Rolleston in increasing wrath.

“ Call it not insult !—she knew not what she said. Be merciful to him, and visit not upon your nephew the errors of his wife. Lend for a time a little portion of your wealth, and it shall be repaid upon your own conditions.”

“ You are a bold and shameless beggar, madam ; disgracing him whose name you bear by such abject supplications ; but I will grant your prayer on one condition, and put your generous self-denial to the proof. Your husband shall be freed—but you shall never see that husband, or those children more !”

A cry of agony was all the answer of the wife and mother.

“ What is your decision, madam ?” questioned Mr. Rolleston sternly.

“ Not that ! not that ! say any thing but

that!" exclaimed Mrs. Trevyllian clasping her hands, and raising her streaming eyes to his in passionate entreaty.

"That—and that only!" he replied with horrible distinctness.

"Then you refuse to comply with my sole condition;" he continued, finding that she did not speak. "When you see your children and your husband wasting away;—when you lay them in the grave, then think that to you they owe their doom, and let the thought be with you till your dying hour."

"Stay! one moment stay!" murmured the half fainting wife, horror stricken at his fearful words: but Mr. Rolleston broke from the hands that would have clasped his knees, and strode across the apartment, thus unexpectedly fronting Rawdon, who, hearing Mrs Trevyllian's cry and Julia's sobs had entered the chamber the preceding instant, and heard his concluding words and offer.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Rolleston starting

in surprise and anger. "This day is to see me highly honoured ; I was not aware of your presence."

"So I concluded," replied Rawdon pointedly, his indignation at his host's unmanly cruelty conquering the embarrassment, which he would otherwise have felt at their meeting.

"Are you too come to request a loan?" demanded Mr. Rolleston with bitter irony, the fever spot of passion coming into his sallow cheek at Rawdon's tone, which had told his opinion of his conduct to his nephew's wife.

"No sir!" answered Rawdon firmly, giving back look for look, yet endeavouring to control his anger, that it might not prejudice his friend. "I only accompanied Mrs. Trevyllian on her journey ; but did not enter with her, fearing lest my folly at our last meeting might make me an unwelcome guest."

"You show a most laudable candour and humility when speaking of yourself," replied

his host with a grim smile; "and your entrance just at the right moment proves you to be as quick in hearing as in acting."

"I am no eavesdropper, Mr. Rolleston, if that is what you mean," said Rawdon warmly. "I heard the cry of your nephew's wife, the sobs of your nephew's child, and came to afford them that protection, which I had not supposed they could require at Rolleston Court."

"You were ever a Knight Errant, Captain Rawdon. The back door shall be opened for your exit—the canoe got ready to convey you across the lake."

"I deserve your rebuke, Mr. Rolleston, and will endeavour to endure it patiently," said Rawdon, inwardly fretting at his host's sarcasm. "Nor can I forget that to you I owe my life."

"Let not the weight of that obligation distress you; a coroner's Inquest would have hurt my dignity."

Rawdon's conscious start would have satisfied Mr. Rolleston that he had quoted his guest's words correctly, had he entertained any doubt on the subject, whilst that guest wished himself at the top of the pyramids, or the bottom of the great Cornish mine, or in any other equally comfortable abode, so that he had been beyond the range of that triumphant gaze. Who had repeated the remark he could not guess ; but that it had been repeated was certain ; and that his host was enjoying his confusion was equally evident.

“ That I have been a fool more than once in my life, Mr. Rolleston, there is no denying,” began Rawdon, unable to conceal his vexation.

“ Then be wise for the future ;—look to your own concerns alone, and neither meddle with a friend's money, nor his wife ;” added Mr. Rolleston.

“ Your advice comes too late, sir ; and having already lost my friend's money and attended his wife on her journey, I must conclude

my enterprise by pleading his cause. Through me is Trevyllian a prisoner ; let me therefore be permitted to appeal in his behalf, and that of his wife and daughters. Look at those weeping children, clinging round their fainting mother ! look at the agony impressed upon her features ! forget your anger !—be their guardian, and their friend !—their more than parent !”

“ Those who caused the evil should repair it,” replied Mr. Rolleston, glancing with an unsoftened look at Mrs. Trevyllian, whose palid cheek was resting upon Julia’s shoulder, the convulsive heaving of her bosom the only sign of life.

“ If that had been in my power, sir, I should not have applied to you : but I too have lost my all by Downing’s villany, except a few hundred pounds, and my commission. The former shall be at Trevyllian’s disposal ; and if you will advance the remainder of the sum required, the half of my pay shall be pledged

for your repayment with any interest you may name."

"I am no usurer, Captain Rawdon," replied his inexorable host, unmoved by this generous proposal. "I have offered to lend the money on one condition;—by that offer I will abide if accepted within eight-and-forty hours; but to more than that neither prayers, nor tears shall urge me.—Repeat this to Tre-vyllian."

"I would cut out my tongue first," exclaimed his hearer indignantly.

"As you please, Captain Rawdon:—you have a right to do what you will with your own, and perhaps had you exercised that right before we had been better friends; but remember that I have an equal privilege. My ex-nephew has chosen a most winning, and conciliating ambassador."

"Far from being your nephew's ambassador, he does not even know of my visit," replied Rawdon in a less excited tone, vexed at

his own impetuosity. “ If I have been betrayed by my zeal into any intemperance of language, I am ready to make every apology, and entreat you to excuse it as the effect of my remorse at having ruined my friend. Censure me as you will, you cannot blame me more than I blame myself; but let not the indiscretion or demerit of the pleader injure the cause of him for whom he pleads. I will not urge upon you the opinion of the world, for I know that you despise it; but I will appeal to your own heart. Can you know peace whilst your sister’s son is left to pine within a prison—to waste his manhood in despair and penury

Youth cannot calculate like age;—the old man reasons, whilst the young one loves.—And shall one act, and one alone for he was dutiful in all beside,—shall this one act—call it a rash one if you will—make him an alien from your hearth? a stranger to your love? can all affection be destroyed by one hasty deed? He has no father, and no mother,—

the very tomb sends forth a voice to plead for him. And for his fault—is there not some excuse? Look at that lovely lady and her lovely children. What if she had not wealth? For nine years she has shared his home, making that home a paradise;—no frown upon her brow—no sharp word on her tongue;—her greatest enemy can bring no charge against her, but her poverty. Her father, though deprived of wealth by unforeseen misfortunes was a man of worth and honor;—her mother fair as painter's dream, and of a character so pure, and so exalted—”.

“Am I to be thus bearded by a stranger? I will hear no more!” exclaimed Mr. Rolleston with a burst of rage, stamping his foot and glaring on the speaker. “Depart! lest I send menials who shall drive you forth! And take away that woman and her howling brats. Tell Henry that I triumph in his pangs, which but fulfil my prophecy; and that if my right hand proffered gold, my left should cut it off.”

Before Rawdon had recovered from the shock of this sudden ebullition, which forbade all further hope, Mr. Rolleston had left the room, flinging back the door with a violence that shook the house.

Nothing was left for the zealous friend but to depart as bidden, and save Mrs. Trevyllian from further insult. With the assistance of the butler and housekeeper, who entered the room almost immediately after by their master's order, and who, in spite of their formal and mechanical manner, shewed more sympathy than would have pleased that master, Mrs. Trevyllian was soon sufficiently restored to re-enter her carriage, and prosecute her melancholy journey to town.

Trevyllian heard his wife's softened account of her visit to his uncle with many thanks for the zeal of herself and Rawdon; and an embrace with a few murmured words, that told how little he should have prized his freedom if purchased by a separation.

“Neither reproach me, Grace; nor think me more than mortal for having concealed the cause of my disagreement with my uncle,” replied her husband in answer to her expressions of gratitude and admiration. “Had you but guessed the truth you would not have become my bride, and I loved you too well to lose you. There required not one moment’s consideration to decide that I would rather be Grace Lowther’s husband, than the heir of Rolleston Court; and never for one moment have I repented of my choice; not even now when the inmate of a prison with nothing but penury before me. Let my uncle do what he will with his gold—let him say what he will of his nephew—that nephew cannot forget the care bestowed on his childhood. The upbraidings of his own heart will be far more bitter than any I could utter;—he will not relent, but he will not be able to hush remorse. I grieve, love, that you should have borne insults for me; but let us cling the closer in our

day of trial. And stay those tears, sweet wife, lest when I look on you and on our children I should become a woman and weep too. We are beggars ; but we are still together."

Mrs. Trevyllian did stay the tears that pained her husband, and the warm hearted Rawdon declaring, as he marked her quiet cheerfulness and devoted attentions, that she was more than mortal, exerted himself with greater zeal to procure his friend's release and provide for his future support ; but as he found few as generous as himself, his success was far from satisfying his anxious friendship.

Mr. Rolleston's determination not to assist his nephew or hold fellowship with any one who did was generally known, and tended not a little to increase his difficulties, as Trevyllian's connections on his mother's side did not choose by offending that gentleman to lose all chance of becoming his heir, whilst his connections on his father's side were few, distant, and in poverty. After some weeks of un-

wearied exertion the best that Rawdon could effect was an arrangement with his former inexorable creditor. Convinced by further enquiry of Trevyllian's integrity, Mr. Wood proposed his undertaking the superintendence of some large Indigo plantations in the East, binding himself to remain for ten (years should Mr. Wood require it;)—the four thousand pounds to be paid by annual deductions from his salary. Even this was only effected by Rawdon's pledging his own pay to a certain extent, should his friend's health so suffer from the climate as to prevent his fulfilling the engagement. Of course so prolonged a residence in India compelled a separation between husband and wife, or parents and children;—and who would furnish the outfit of those who were to go, or the maintenance of those who were to remain, the passage being all for which Mr. Wood would provide? As a last resource, Rawdon again waited on the Gunnings, who had only paid their half-niece, as they were

careful to call her, one brief, cold visit, and with them he found Mr. Bradley, a second cousin of Mr. Rolleston's, a kindhearted squire, so well pleased with country sports, and country occupations, particularly farming his own estates, that his visits to town, to use an unhacknied expression, were 'like an angel's visit short, and far between.' Living in different counties, and with different pursuits, he had seen Trevyllian but once since his marriage, yet one of the items in his memorandum book, mixed in with inquiries concerning ploughs, horses, and bone manure, was to learn the truth of the reports concerning his cousin's loss and imprisonment, which had reached the remote corner in which he resided; and for this purpose he had that morning called on Mrs. Gunning, who was an old acquaintance. "A very good thing indeed! I am sure Trevyllian should feel much obliged to you," observed Mr. Gunning after hearing the arrangement with Mr. Wood from Raw-

don, who had come to consult with him as to the means of carrying it into effect, before he proposed it to his friend.—“A very good thing indeed!” repeated Mr. Gunning, Mrs. Trevyllian’s half-uncle by marriage, delighted at the prospect of shipping a poor relation off for India, and thus being freed from the disgrace of her poverty and the dread of being compelled to contribute to her support. “The East is the place for making money; and he will come back a nabob, I daresay; he can begin with ventures for others—then for himself—and so return rolling in riches.”

“You forget that Trevyllian’s time will be fully occupied with Mr. Wood’s plantations, and that he has no capital for ventures,” answered Rawdon gravely, disgusted at his host’s selfishness.

“Oh! as for the money, he must save;—and for the time, get up a little earlier, and go to bed a little later; he has good health, and

must stir himself to pay off his debt," remarked Mr. Gunning, colouring slightly at Rawdon's rebuking tone.

"Trevyllian is an honourable fellow, and I am sure will do all he can; but one cannot work as one does here in the East where every day is like one of the dog days, and they have no proper agricultural instruments," replied the good-natured Mr. Bradley, who had acquired a horror of Indian heat from observing the indolence of some of those who had endured it; and who had a thorough contempt for their style of farming, of which, be it remarked, he knew little or nothing.

"You judge correctly, sir," said Rawdon, warmly, "Trevyllian will do all that the most honorable man can do, but human powers have their limits; and, besides, in his case, there are preliminaries, painful preliminaries, which must be arranged before he can become Mr. Wood's agent. Means must be provided

for the fitting out, and passage of his wife and children, if they accompany him, or for their maintenance if they do not."

"To be sure, and his friends must contribute," observed Mr. Bradley, with a glance at the Gunning's, whose real meanness he suspected, notwithstanding their general character for liberality. "Trevyllian is but my second cousin once removed, or third cousin, or whatever it may be, for I never can understand those roundabout genealogies, and I have a rising family of my own; but still I am quite ready to contribute as far as bad crops, and low prices will admit. He was a fine young man when I last saw him, and though to be sure it was not very prudent to marry a girl with only three thousand pounds in the teeth of his uncle, his wife was such a sweet, pretty creature that one could scarcely blame him, and we must not expect great wisdom at one and twenty. It would have been much better if he had taken a farm as I proposed, offering to

assist him with my advice ; but he had more taste for books than ploughs—admired the *Eneid* more than the *Georgics*, so there is no use in saying more about it, though I could have told him what Downing would turn out. Why the fellow did not know a drill from a harrow.”

“ All the blame of that choice must rest with me,” said Rawdon, anxious to clear his friend in the judgment of one, who, if not the possessor of splendid talents, appeared to have a feeling heart.

“ I suppose it must, since you say so, Captain Rawdon ; for few take blame to themselves, when they can by any possibility fix it on another ; but if not a good adviser, you seem a zealous friend, and that is as rare, or more rare and valuable than a wise counselor,” replied Mr. Bradley, completely won by the frankness of the warm hearted soldier. “ But we must prove to Trevyllian that you are not his only friend. Eh, Mr. Gunning !

Suppose we put down three hundred a piece if they all go ; or fit out Mrs. Trevyllian, and take the girls between us if they leave them behind, which will be the best plan, for India is a bad place for children. What say you ?”

“ Why really, Mr. Bradley, you take me by surprise ;—I will consult with my wife and let you know the result ; but we had money in Pinder’s bank, which will never pay more than three shillings in the pound,” replied Mr. Gunning, who, generally slow, scarcely moved at all in the cause of charity, except when that charity was to be blazoned forth—bartered for an answering quantity of praise ; and who was overpowered by Bradley’s generosity.

“ Come ; come Gunning ! You had but two hundred pounds in Pinder’s bank as I know for certain ; and will receive ten shillings in the pound at least : besides you have no children as I have, and nothing to fear from Swing, the fly, or the smut. Consult with Mrs. Gunning at once, whilst Captain Rawdon

and I go into the next room. We should save Trevyllian all needless anxiety;—his loss is severe enough without any aggravation.”

Mr. Gunning did consult with his lady, and the result of their consultation was a proposal to take one of the children, and advance two hundred pounds to their parents with the full understanding that they were to have complete control over their protégée, and were not to be called on or expected to give more at any future time, let what would occur.

“Mind we take the eldest,” whispered Mrs. Gunning to her husband. “She bids fair to be a greater beauty than her mother, and may marry into the peerage;—the other is a fright—and though two hundred pounds is a great deal, by advancing that sum, we shall get them out of the country, and poor relations are the plague of your life; always expecting you to be delighted to see them, even when they pop in, which they are sure to do, at the most inconvenient moment: and

then always teasing you to get in a boy here, or a girl there ; or to contribute to a birth or a wedding.”

“ Very well then, I will take charge of the youngest, who shall be brought up with my own children, and share all their advantages,” observed Mr. Bradley, on hearing the result of Mr. Gunning’s conference with his lady, but unaccompanied by that lady’s reasons. “ So now, Captain Rawdon, you can go and set Tre-vyllian’s mind at rest, since you say he is not averse to the plan ; and tell him that I shall call in an hour’s time.”

“ Averse to the plan ?—I should think not ! —it is far better than he could have expected ; —a most excellent thing !” remarked Mr. Gunning, as he bowed Rawdon a second time out of his splendid drawing room, but with rather more politeness than before.

“ An excellent thing to be banished from England for ten years ! burnt yellow with the sun—dyed blue with the indigo—parted from

wife and children—perhaps both—working all the time to pay off a debt incurred by another, —and then to begin the world again ! Ventures indeed ! Will Mr. Gunning advance the capital ? I hate that plausible man, and his fashionable wife, who would ride to the moon on a broomstick to get a bow from a lord,” said Rawdon to himself as he proceeded on his way to Trevyllian. “That Bradley is an honest, warm-hearted man, and I hope he rules at home, not his fine lady partner, who from what I hear is twin sister to Mrs. Gunning, though the genealogists have not made out the relationship. Now to tell Trevyllian and his devoted wife that the best I can do for them is banishment and separation ! I could almost wish that I had cut out my tongue as Mr. Rolleston recommended long ago. And to think that that stern vindictive man with his Mephistopheles smile is revelling in wealth ! It is clear that this is a world of trial, not of retribution ; and as we all deserve eternal torment

we must not grumble at temporary punishment."

"What news, Rawdon?" asked Trevyllian, after shaking hands with his friend. "I see you are freighted with great intelligence half good, half evil, I should judge from your countenance. I have served a sharp, though short apprenticeship to sorrow, and could now become a master in the trade. "Speak out! Have you failed in your expected arrangement with Mr. Wood?"

"No; but I am sad at my own success. You shall hear and decide for yourself; only remember that you are not pledged to this indigo agency; and that I am as ready as ever to exert all my powers to procure you something more desirable."

"I must go, though feeling all the pain of such a decision," replied Trevyllian when Rawdon had related every particular. "I have no words to thank you for your friendly zeal; you have begged for me what you would not have

begged for yourself. May God reward you—for I cannot ! The agency is more than I could have expected ;—but this parting !—my poor Grace !” he continued, turning away with a quivering lip.

If Rawdon’s feeling heart was pained by this emotion in his friend, how much more deeply was it wrung when he marked Mrs. Trevyllian with a face as pale as a marble statue, in which agony had swallowed up every other expression, clasp her children to her bosom with a convulsive shudder, as if she feared they would be torn away.

“ It shall not be, Mrs. Trevyllian ! it shall not be ! I will sell my commission and we will set off to Van Dieman’s land, and make our fortune. I will beg—steal—do any thing—only don’t look in that unearthly way,” exclaimed poor Rawdon, so shocked and bewildered at the agony expressed in the mother’s countenance, that he was half beside himself with pity, and knew not what he was

saying. "I will go directly," he added, rushing towards the door; and there is no knowing in what wild scheme he might have engaged, had not Trevyllian detained him.

That Mrs. Trevyllian felt most acutely the parting with her children, even after she had subdued her anguish at the first idea, might be clearly seen in her quivering lip, and swimming eye, when she looked upon them; and the suddenness with which she would sometimes catch them to her heart; but no murmurs increased her husband's pangs, and his gentle soothing was ever met by an attempt to smile, though such attempts were frequently more distressing than the most passionate burst of tears. To be with her husband was, to the devoted wife, to be not only where duty, but inclination called her:—to be with him was to be happy!—yet the scarcely less devoted mother might have found it difficult to decide on leaving her children, had the decision rested with her, which it did not;—the point was decided by

others. A medical friend gave it as his opinion that Grace could not live six months in a warm climate; and that even Julia, though more robust, could not endure the heat of India for more than a year; whilst the Gunnings plainly declared that they would permit no change in the plan proposed. To submit, therefore, to what she could not alter was the duty of this devoted wife and mother; and so well did she perform the painful task that she increased the admiration of Rawdon, and the affection of her husband.

Trevyllian was released—the furniture at Beechley disposed of advantageously — all necessary preparations made for the voyage, and within three weeks he, who should have been the heir of Rolleston Court, was standing with his wife on the deck of the Bengal, her eyes turned on him with a look which said—“ I have no other left on earth but you !” Rawdon had cheered himself and friend at parting with the hope of meeting in more prosperous times.

Owing to the affairs of the deceased Darby turning out less desperate than had been expected, the original debt was rather reduced ; and, as Trevyllian was to receive a per centage on the indigo shipped for England, it was hoped that by diligence, unless the times proved very disastrous, he might, at the end of the ten years, not only be free from debt, but possessed of a sufficient sum to enable him to return to Europe. Still it was banishment ; and so it was felt to be by those who departed for a foreign land ;—and the zealous Rawdon who remained behind, looking after the receding vessel till he was ashamed of his long continued gaze.

CHAPTER IV.

THE parting between the parents and their children was a sight to touch the sternest heart ; and when Rawdon, receiving the girls from their father, who had taken them from their half fainting mother, placed them in the carriage that was to convey them to the Gunnings, it would have been difficult to decide whose tears fell the fastest, though his were the soonest checked.

That night the sisters were together and cried themselves to sleep in each other's arms ; but

the next morning Grace was to accompany Mr. Bradley into ——shire, and it was uncertain when they would meet again, though Mrs. Gunning, to stop their weeping, made many promises, more even the children shrewdly suspected than she intended to perform.

When Grace was roused in the morning from her troubled sleep, remembering the parting of the night before, she clasped her arms so tightly round Julia's neck, that the maid found it impossible to remove them, giving way to a passion of tears that no threats, no persuasions could stop. Mrs. Gunning was called, but her bland accents were of slight avail, though Grace did check her sobs for some moments to listen to her cozening offers; and Julia became very tolerably docile, won to obedience by the prospect of fine clothes, fine sights, cakes, books, and sugar plums.

Shocked at the uproar, Mr. Gunning tried his authority, but Grace turned away from his threats with a shudder, and clung so tightly

round her sister's neck that Julia stood some chance of being choked ; whilst her own sobs grew so convulsive, that her hearers were afraid of her breaking a blood vessel.

"I never met with such an obstinate child in all my life ; she clings so tightly to her sister that there is no removing her ; and her cries and screams are horrible," concluded Mrs. Gunning, after explaining to Mr. Bradley why Grace was not ready to accompany him.

"Poor little thing ! it is a pity to separate the girls, they seem so much attached, at least for the present, and just after parting with their father and mother too. Suppose we leave them together for a short time," replied Mr. Bradley, who had one of the kindest of hearts, though he too often allowed the persuasions of others to smother its sympathies.

"Excuse me," said Mrs. Gunning coldly, "my health is too delicate to allow of my taking charge of two children, even for a short

time, particularly when one has such a temper. I shall find enough to do in managing Julia, and you will recollect that it was only through your persuasions I consented to undertake a charge, which with my invalid habits, is a great and heavy task."

Mr. Bradley looked rather incredulous as to the lady's invalidism; but made no attempt to convince her that she was in perfect health. "As taking care of the children between us was my proposition, and you object to keeping Grace for a short time, we must try what can be done; I hate to hear a child cry. Is there no promise we could make to induce her to go quietly, if not willingly?"

"I fear nothing but actual force will be effectual; she cares for neither threats nor bribes, though I have offered cakes, toys, and clothes. I saw enough of her temper last night when I sent away that ugly spaniel, which Captain Rawdon was silly enough to let her bring. As if I should keep such a creature! I

hate dogs in a room, they spoil the furniture, always lying about on the chairs and sofas."

"I do not wonder at her crying when parted from Frolic, for the dog seemed to watch the children and comprehend their wishes; and I understand when either of them are ill that he will stay in the sick room all day, looking quite miserable. Where is the spaniel?"

"Not in the house, I trust, as I bade the butler take it away, and never let me see it again."

"Suppose we enquire; the animal may enable us to quiet the poor child's grief."

Frolic was still in the house, and with the dog in his arms Mr. Bradley proceeded to the room where the sobbing Grace was clinging to her sister. His kindness and honesty of purpose soon effected what Mr. Gunning's threats and his wife's promises had failed to accomplish.

"Shall dear Frolic really go with me? and shall no one take him away?" questioned the child, looking into his face after she had

listened to Mr. Bradley's explanation of the impossibility of her remaining with Julia, and the propriety of yielding to her parents' wishes by accompanying him to Elmwood Lodge.

"He shall be your own dog, Grace, and no one shall take him away. I like children to love animals, it gives promise of an affectionate temper," replied Mr. Bradley, who, having a rather overweening regard for four-footed creatures himself, approved of the same taste in others. "But, in return you must be very good, and not cry any more. I have two little girls at home who will shew you all their play things, and whom you will soon love very much."

"I won't love any one as well as Julia," exclaimed Grace passionately; "but I will go with you because papa and mamma say so; and because you will take Frolic too. I don't care for cakes, or dolls, or fine clothes."

When Grace entered the drawing room ready for her journey, her arm was round Julia's

neck, and her eyes were red and swollen, but there was no further shew of rebellion, though much of sorrow. Young as she was, it was evident she was struggling for self command, yet a sob would now and then burst forth in spite of her earnest efforts.

“There is something in that girl,” thought Mr. Bradley as he marked her manner in taking leave of the Gunnings; with the instinct possessed by many children, she understood their hollowness, though she could not have depicted their character in words.

The sisters parted with another embrace, a fresh burst of tears, and reiterated promises never to love any one else as well. Mr. Bradley put his weeping charge into the carriage with all a father’s care, whilst Frolic settled himself in the lap of his young mistress, who, exhausted by her late emotion, and fatigued by travelling, soon fell asleep to the great delight of her escort, who was much puzzled to entertain a child under six years of age.

Had Mrs. Trevyllian better understood the characters of Mesdames Gunning and Bradley her anxiety for the future welfare of her children would have been greatly increased; but, fortunately for her peace of mind, she had only seen the best of either, and could not anticipate the dangers and sorrows to which they would be subjected by such a guardianship. Being girls, the characters of the gentlemen comparatively mattered little, they generally taking no part, or a very small one in the education of the female branches of their families. Women are accused of being frivolous—we will not say justly or unjustly;—but are fathers and brothers who utter this complaint free from blame, if they make no attempt to amend their frivolity?

Mr. Bradley ruled in the kennel, the stable, and the farm; but, unhappily, he did not rule in his own house, as Rawdon had hoped; there Mrs. Bradley generally held the sway, and her husband had to endure many a lec-

ture for his thoughtless, and, as his lady considered, most impolitic acts. To be scolded and advised against your will by word of mouth is penalty sufficient for all petty misdemeanours ;—to be scolded and advised against your will by stroke of pen is enough to overturn the philosophy of a bolder man than Mr. Bradley. A letter written on three sides, the folds-down, and under the seal ; and then this letter crossed in a very lady like, but very illegible hand, all scolding, advice, and admonition, might have alarmed Rowland the Brave, or any other of Charlemagne's Paladins, or Arthur's Knights of the Round Table ; particularly as the lady looked for answers to her lengthy epistles, and was always sure to discover if only half had been read ; and though Mr. Bradley was more skilled in calligraphy than either Roland, or Sir Launcelot, or even the Emperor Charlemagne, or King Arthur himself, (if we may believe some ancient scandals concerning their penmanship—

the sword in those days ranking higher than the pen), still that gentleman never being able to fill more than the first page, unless writing what Mrs. Bradley termed ‘The Farmer’s Journal,’ he always looked with dismay amounting to horror on one of these written lectures, and to avoid them when setting out on a journey, generally averred that he should be so constantly moving it would be impossible to give his address, promising in obedience to his wife’s express commands, to send a line announcing the time of his return. Acting on his usual plan, Mrs. Bradley had only received a short notice of the day when she might expect to see him, with a brief statement of the fact that Grace Trevyllian was to accompany him, and become a permanent guest at Elmwood lodge, leaving the lady no time to object to the arrangement, or propose an alteration. That she would object at first her husband had no doubt, as she never approved of any of his schemes effected without her

previous counsel; and as he drew near home he anticipated a matrimonial lecture and prepared to receive it with submission or remonstrance, as the case might require. In the early part of the day his anxiety concerning the agricultural prospects of the county, and his good natured attempts to amuse the little Grace, who had won a place in his heart by her affectionate manner, and the silence or, as he thought, attention with which she listened to a long explanation touching ploughs, harrows, and drills, had diverted his mind from the threatened admonitions; but as he approached Elmwood Lodge his anticipations grew less and less pleasant.

“Let her say what she will here the child shall stay—that is poz!” was his concluding resolution, as taking Grace by the hand, he led her boldly into the presence of Mrs. Bradley perhaps hoping that his lady would refrain from cutting comments during the presence of his little charge;—if so he was mistaken.

It was the close of a November day when the travellers arrived ;—one of those cold, raw, dull days, that make one as stupid and sulky as itself. There was not a glimpse of blue sky, nor a gleam of sunshine, and though there was still light enough left to shew every object distinctly it was that cold and unpicturesque light through which persons and things are seen to the greatest disadvantage. It was a day to make one cross—a light to make one look ugly ;—and Mrs. Bradley, who had chosen to expect her husband without the slightest reason some hours sooner, and had then chosen to be vexed at his non-arrival, was certainly not in the most amiable of moods. If she had not, like Tam O'Shanter's wife ;—

“ Nursed her wrath to keep it warm ;”

it was sufficiently warm without any nursing as might be seen by her mode of poking the fire.

“ So, my dear, you are come at last !” be-

gan Mrs. Bradley, who was always most particular to say, my dear, and use her blindest tones, when most out of humour, having ever before her the lessons of her youth that it was not ladylike to speak loud, or appear in a passion. She was one of that very numerous class of persons who ‘Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.’ An act unfitting a lady would have shocked her—a feeling unfitting a christian was as a mote in her eye, unperceived, unfelt; or if felt or perceived, unheeded, as long as it attracted not the notice of others. The approval and disapproval of her own conscience was nothing to her;—she lived only in the opinion of the public; a polished selfishness was her distinguishing characteristic, though that polish was not always as perfect as she desired, owing to a naturally bad taste and worse temper. Not without natural affections, her duties as a mother were better performed than those of any other relation of life; but even here was discernible the vanity of

one who sought the applause of the multitude more than the happiness of the object of her regard. There are show houses, that, despite their splendour, convey no idea of comfort or happiness, but strike a chill to the observer; Mrs. Bradley was a show woman—an ornament to a ball room, for she had a good complexion, good features, and a good figure; all the attributes of beauty, except its brightest, a winning expression; but the observer was not attracted by that irresistible something which, springing from the heart, has charms a thousandfold more powerful than all the allurements of mere form and colour. Many admired Mrs. Bradley—none, save her own children, loved her;—strangers liked her—real friends she had not;—calculating selfishness being incompatible with sincere affection. She was very anxious that her daughters should be highly educated, or rather, according to her definition of the term, highly accomplished. She wished them to play, sing, draw, dance, to

perfection ; but the education of the mind and heart—the instilling a holy and abiding principle on which all actions should be based, she did not understand, and therefore did not attempt. She too, like other mothers, speculated on the future ;—she desired, she sought splendid matches for her daughters, careless whether such matches would promote their happiness ; or rather considering splendour and happiness synonymous. She desired the same for her sons ; let them be rich and admired, she little cared what evil passions they indulged, or on what erroneous principles they acted. Gild the apple on the outside, and she cared not if within it was dust and ashes. She had married Mr. Bradley because she considered it a good match ; and she thought herself an exemplary wife because she performed the honors of his house, and regulated his establishment to her own admiration, if not always to the admiration of her visitors and servants. She certainly did look very well at

the head of his table, which she took care should always be well arranged ; but deferring to his opinion, when it clashed with her own, or making his happiness her first earthly object formed no item in her list of a wife's duties.

“ So, my dear, you are come at last ; I have been expecting you these three hours.”

“ I am sorry for that, Eliza ; but I fixed no time for my arrival, and had you counted up the miles, and considered the state of the roads, you would not have expected me before.”

“ The horse that you bought at such an enormous price having turned out lame, as I was convinced it would, I have not been able to drive out and ascertain the state of the roads,” observed his lady, who had a talent, when out of humour, for bringing into her discourse every subject that could annoy the person with whom she was conversing, and yet bringing in that annoying subject so naturally that a stranger could scarcely imagine it done by premedita-

tion. "The coachman thinks he will never be sound again; but we will hope for the best, as one hundred and twenty guineas is no trifle to us with a family becoming more expensive every year, and agriculture so much depressed. Henry ought to go to Eton immediately, and Stephen should not remain much longer where he now is; whilst Harriet and Eliza will soon be wanting better masters than can be procured in the country. But what odd little girl have you got there; she continued staring at Grace, who shrank from her contemptuous inquisition.

"Grace Trevyllian, who is to live with us till her parents return from India, as I wrote you word, my dear;" answered her husband, leading the unwilling child towards her.

"Impossible! I will not believe it!" exclaimed the lady with a slight elevation of voice, to express her surprise and displeasure.

"It is true, my dear, nevertheless. Did you not receive the letter stating my intention?"

"I concluded you were in jest, particularly

as you left me no time to object to the plan, which I should most undoubtedly have done. Even now I cannot believe that you seriously contemplate an act so utterly opposed to all your interests, so absolutely ruinous to all your prospects. You could not take me to town last spring the crops were so bad ; you could not have a new carriage, the prices were so low ; and yet—”

“Come, come, Eliza, be a little reasonable,” said her husband, interrupting her with a good-natured smile, though annoyed at her opposition. “One mouth makes little difference in such a family as ours, and Miss Heywood can teach her with our own girls, and take all trouble off your hands.”

“You held a different belief when a footboy was the question, telling me that the argument of one mouth making no difference might be acted on to the ruin of the most wealthy family in England,” replied his lady delighted at having such an excellent opportunity of vent-

ing her vexation at the negative given to her proposition of keeping another servant. "Then Miss Heywood being only engaged to educate two, may require an increase of salary for taking charge of a third ; and there are such articles as shoes, frocks, and bonnets, for I suppose you intend her to wear such things, all of which cost money, to say nothing of my trouble and anxiety, and the bill for medical attendance, which, judging from appearances, will soon be requisite. The child has the jaundice now, or the yellow fever or something worse. Did you ever see such a skin in your life ?" continued his lady, glancing complacently at her own clear red and white, in an opposite glass. "Then the face so swelled too ; I shall be afraid to let her be with Harriet and Eliza, lest they should catch the infection. We had better get her out of the house as soon as possible ; depend upon it she is going to have some very serious illness. This is no child of Mrs. Trevyllian's I am sure,

but some little fright you have picked up on the road to joke me with."

"Nonsense!" said her husband pettishly, vexed at her remarks, the more so, as he felt that Grace, wounded at his lady's words, was pressing closer to his side for protection. "I am not in the habit of playing such jokes. The poor child has been in delicate health; her face is swelled and red with crying, and this is a dull looking day, but she is no fright."

"I dare say you are right, my dear, as you always are, and I do not know what a fright is. No doubt I have been deceived, and her complexion is like snow, her eyes not at all like a ferret's," replied his wife with most provoking mock humility, turning round the child to the light and staring at her contemptuously. "But supposing her to be a perfect beauty, as you assert, that beauty will by no means render her residence here more eligible, on the contrary less so, as that superlative loveliness

may throw our girls into the shade, and entrap one of our boys into a union with a beggar, which would be inconvenient considering the present distressed state of agriculture, as an establishment for the young couple would be rather more expensive than a footboy."

"Psha! my dear; you have no fear of this, and you need have none. Your children are too well tutored not to consider wealth the first, if not the only consideration in a matrimonial connection. I never said the child was a beauty; but she is a good, affectionate little thing, and we must do the best we can for her."

"Which best for her will be the very worst for us," replied his wife with sharpness, seeing that Mr. Bradley was more inclined than usual to oppose her wishes on a point, which, having nothing to do with the farm, she thought should be left entirely to her decision. "Mr. Rolleston has not only disinherited his nephew, refusing to assist him in any way,

but has also declared that he shall consider any one who aids, or even holds intercourse with him, as flying in his face and offering him a personal affront. Being Mr. Rolleston's nearest relative, and therefore natural heir, I leave you to prove the wisdom of not only advancing money to the disinherited nephew, but absolutely adopting one of his children; that is if you were really in earnest when stating such an intention, which I am inclined to doubt. You will lose the reversion of Rolleston Court with all its arable and pasture land by putting such a project into execution; nay possibly you may have lost it already by the mere idea."

"I never thought of that;" replied Mr. Bradley struck with the truth of her last remark, and, for the moment, regretting his probable loss as the rich land round Rolleston Court with all its capabilities of improvement came into his remembrance.

His wife saw the effect produced by her

words, and her hopes grew stronger ; but for once she reckoned without her host.

“ My dear Henry, you never think of any thing ; and thus are perpetually getting into scrapes from your too great kindness of heart ; but, perhaps, this evil may yet be repaired. Send away the child, and let Mr. Rolleston understand that you do this solely in compliance with his wishes.”

“ And what is to become of the poor little thing ?”

“ Oh ! send her back to the Gunnings, who are her nearest relatives, and have no children ; or ship her off to the East after her parents.”

“ She would not live six months in a hot climate.”

“ Situated as the Trevyllians are, that would be no such great misfortune,”

“ It would break their hearts,” interrupted her husband. “ Do you suppose that poverty destroys the affection of parents for their children ? If you had seen them as I saw them

after the parting, you would not talk as you do. I tell you what," continued Mr. Bradley with honest indignation; "I promised Trevyllian and his wife that I would treat their child as though she were my own, and I will keep that promise let who will say nay. As long as I have a guinea that poor child shall have her share;—old Rolleston is nothing to me."

"Of course not, my dear; nor Rolleston Court either."

"Fie on you, wife! for tempting me to break my promise for the sake of gold and lands. Trevyllian bears his misfortunes nobly, and Rolleston Court ought to, and I hope will yet be his. Yes I hope it, Mrs. Bradley, look as incredulous as you will; if I hoped otherwise for a moment shame upon me for having such a thought in my heart; and more shame on you for putting it there. Mind, madam; my orders are that she shall be treated in every respect exactly like Harriet and Eliza: if any

thing with more indulgence," exclaimed Mr. Bradley taking the little hand which had relinquished its grasp during the late conversation, of which Grace had comprehended far more than her hearers suspected.

"Just as you please, my dear; it is not for me to resist your will: a wife's duty is to obey, even though that obedience may entail ruin on herself and family," replied Mrs. Bradley with mock submission, convinced from her husband's determined manner that further opposition at that moment would only confirm him in his resolution. "What is that black ball at Miss Grace Trevyllian's feet?" she continued in a tone of irony, the paleness of her usually glowing cheek, shewing the extent of her anger.

"A spaniel, and great pet of Grace's," replied her husband drily.

"And is it your desire that Miss Grace Trevyllian's dog shall be treated with as great respect as Miss Grace Trevyllian herself?"

“Certainly,” said Mr. Bradley sharply.

“Then, my dear, will you be kind enough to ring the bell, and give the servants orders to that effect, and announce the same to the hordes of dogs which infest the house and grounds, or Miss Grace Trevyllian’s favourite may not be treated with sufficient courtesy.”

“Psha!” muttered the provoked husband, as he quitted the room with Grace, for the purpose of introducing her himself to her cousins, hoping by this means to ensure her a kind reception.

“Good morning, Miss Heywood. Here girls, I have brought you a new cousin, and playfellow,” said Mr. Bradley, as he entered the school-room with Grace, closely followed by Frolic. Harriet and Eliza, two good-looking girls of seven and eight, rising, or rather descending from their stiff backed German chairs, on which they were seated, welcomed their papa and cousin with all due propriety, whilst Miss Heywood returned his greeting

with a manner best described by calling it studied ease, contradictory as such a term may appear.

“Pooh, girls! is that the way to receive your cousin? I would rather a thousand times have a kiss and a hug, than those graceful courtesies. You are meeting your father and not the king; and are children not women; that is if there are such things now-a-days, which I begin to doubt,” observed Mr. Bradley pettishly, not having recovered his good temper, which had been ruffled by the conversation with his wife.

“I can assure you, sir, that your daughters entertain the most deferential respect—” began Miss Heywood, speaking as if reciting.

“I dare say they do,” interposed Mr. Bradley, who had almost as great a horror of Miss Heywood’s declamations, as of his wife’s lectures. “Their manner is very decorous and reverential; but I should prefer a little more warmth and affection;—more nature, and less art; but

that is not Mrs. Bradley's plan, and she rules in the school-room, so we will say no more about it. A few plain words at first may prevent misunderstanding hereafter, and therefore I have introduced this little stranger to you myself. I consider Grace Trevyllian as one of my own children whilst under my roof, and expect every one else to treat her as such."

"Undoubtedly, sir ; it is but for you to give expression to your wishes, and their fulfilment will ever be the delighted endeavour of myself and pupils," replied Miss Heywood.

"I trust so," said Mr. Bradley speaking quickly to prevent that lady from commencing another sentence. "I must beg you to give the girls a holiday that they may amuse their cousin. Ah, Frolic ! you think I have forgotten you, and so are rubbing against my legs. This dog, Miss Heywood, is to accompany Grace let her be where she may ; unless parted from her at her particular request."

"Certainly, sir ; your will is law, judicious

and irreversible. I should only presume to hint that the presence of the spaniel may possibly have the effect of distracting the attention of your ever amiable and docile children."

"Never mind that ; a little less learning and a great deal more play would do them no harm ; besides Frolic is as quiet as a mouse at proper times. I will send you some dinner, Grace ; and go to bed when you like, for I dare say you are tired. Good night ; I leave you to become acquainted with your cousins. Mind, no more lessons till to-morrow," he added, putting his head in again at the door. "And don't cry, Gracey, but play and make yourself happy."

Play, and make herself happy ! Poor Grace ! it was many a long and weary year ere the smile of joy was on her lips, and its light dancing in her eyes.

"You had better take a seat, my dear, and cease to weep, for tears are highly injurious

to the brightness and durability of the visual organs," remarked Miss Heywood, with what she considered an admirable mingling of the dignity of the governess, and the kindness of the woman.

Grace sat down, but her tears flowed on.

"Can you play?" asked Miss Bradley.

"Yes," said Grace in a whisper, for there was something artificial in the address of governess and pupil that chilled and frightened her.

"What do you play? Can you play '*Nel cor piu*'?" again questioned Harriet.

"No, I can't play that," replied Grace with the most perfect simplicity, looking up for the first time; "but I can play blind man's buff and Tom Titler; only I am tired now."

A burst of laughter from governess and pupils natural enough to have pleased Mr. Bradley, followed this *naive* reply; and as a consequence, poor Grace's tears fell faster and faster, till they amounted to sobs.

“Harriet means can you play on the piano,” said Miss Eliza Bradley, speaking only half intelligibly on account of her continued laughter.

“No,” gasped Grace.

“Don’t you even know your notes?” asked both the Misses Bradley at once.

“No,” sobbed poor Grace, adding nothing to this brief reply, lest she should again become the object of mirth to her young cousins.

“What is the matter?” asked Mrs. Bradley, who entered the school-room at that moment, surprised at the half choking sobs of Grace, and the unusually loud laughter of her daughters and their instructress.

“Oh, mamma! only think how funny!” cried both children at once, their utterance interrupted by bursts of merriment. “We asked her,” pointing to Grace, “if she could play ‘*Nel cor piu,*’ and she said no:—but she could play blindman’s buff and Tom Titler. And she can’t play the piano at all and does

not even know her notes ;—only think how funny ! We can play a great many tunes.”

“There are few children, my dears, who have had such pains taken with their education as yourselves. Mrs. Trevyllian brought up her girls on a different plan, and I have understood was not an accomplished woman,” replied Mrs. Bradley in a self-complacent tone, thus encouraging her children’s vanity, and their contempt for their cousin, instead of repressing both.

“The Misses Bradley are indeed fortunate, ma’am. Few are blessed with mothers so admirably fitted to perform the duties of that important and interesting situation ; to direct and superintend their children’s education, and aid with their maternal counsel and assistance the efforts of those who devote themselves to the improvement of the childish intellect,” observed Miss Heywood.

“And I am sure the girls are very fortunate in having such an able instructress,” replied Mrs.

Bradley, who always listened most graciously to Miss Heywood's studied flatteries, and admired her style of speaking. "What is that child sobbing so for? I hate to hear a noise in the house; and never, as you know, allow my children to cry."

"Indeed ma'am I cannot comprehend the cause of Miss Trevyllian's evident, and most distressing emotion; unless she weeps at not knowing her notes, those stepping stones to the heavenly harmony of other spheres; or is suffering from the languor and fatigue consequent on her recent locomotion," replied Miss Heywood, who not being able to reconcile Mr. Bradley's command that the stranger should be treated as one of his own children, and Mrs. Bradley's manner when speaking of this same stranger, deemed it most prudent not to blame or praise till she better understood the state of parties.

"Are you tired?" questioned Mrs. Bradley in the sharpest tone, which she ever permitted herself to use.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Then you had better go to bed,” observed her hostess abruptly.

“Yes,” again sobbed poor Grace, rising with alacrity, ready to go any where, or do any thing that would take her from the presence of Mrs. Bradley.

“Ring the bell then, Miss Heywood, if you please ; and tell the under housemaid to put her to bed. I only hope she will wake in a more amiable temper, or I must adopt harsher measures than mere admonition ; the peace of my school-room must not be disturbed by such noisy and vulgar sobbing. Your judicious instructions, my dear Miss Heywood, will I trust effect a speedy amendment.”

“You may depend, madam, on my exerting my poor abilities to their very utmost, on every point to which you shall be kind enough to direct them ; indeed Mr. Bradley has already explained his generous desire that I should bestow on Miss Trevyllian the same

anxious cares and solicitous attentions which I have for some months been in the daily habit of bestowing on my present sweet and intelligent pupils."

"This is all very well of Mr. Bradley, whose kindness is so apt to outrun his prudence; and, as you know, I never dispute his will; but limits must be sometimes put to his generosity, or it would degenerate into weakness. Since he has chosen to undertake the charge of the child, of course she will receive all proper attention; but the bringing up a girl without a sixpence, or the probability of possessing one, the same as our own children, who have fortune and connections, with every chance of making brilliant matches, would be as injurious to her as injudicious in us. A plain education—one to fit her hereafter for undertaking the situation of companion or nursery governess, is the course best calculated to promote her happiness; and I am sure, Miss Heywood, that I may leave it to your

discriminating judgment to make that difference in your treatment which, without causing malicious comparisons, will teach the child her proper station in the family."

"I perfectly agree with you, madam, on every point, admiring greatly the clearness, yet delicacy of your definitions; and the judicious generosity of your sentiments. Believe me that I feel highly flattered by your reliance on my judgment, and trust that time, which reveals the future, will prove that this reliance has not been misplaced. You may depend on your wishes being strictly attended to concerning the child." she no longer called her Miss Trevyllian. "But may I request to know your pleasure concerning the dog. I fear its presence in the school-room may distract the attention of my pupils, industrious though I have ever found them, uniting the quickness of genius to the docility and perseverance of mere common sense. I fear, I repeat, that its presence may in some degree interfere with

the acquirement of that knowledge which expands, and those accomplishments which gild the female mind."

"Oh, send it to the kennel," cried Mrs. Bradley, not quite restored to good humour by this highly seasoned flattery of herself and daughters, though never suspecting that her much prized governess was addicted to talking pompous nonsense.

An involuntary scream from Grace at this order, as catching up the dog she walked hastily towards the door, proved to Mrs. Bradley that on this point at least her husband's will must be obeyed; an appeal to him, which the child's manner threatened, would, she knew, end in her defeat, and therefore must not be made. "Or, perhaps, you had better let it remain at present; but complain to Mr. Bradley if you find it troublesome," added the lady after a moment's hesitation.

The scream and the resolute manner had changed her intention, but confirmed her

hatred ; from that moment she was the resolute foe of Grace Trevyllian ; openly so when she dared—secretly so when prudence, or we should say selfish policy, required a kind exterior.

“There now, go to bed, and let me see no tears in the morning ; no one is allowed to cry here,” said Mr. Bradley, as Ann, the under-housemaid, made her appearance.

So Grace Trevyllian went dinnerless to bed on the day of her arrival under that roof where she was to be treated in every respect as one of the family, though it was not dark even in her small room with its sloping roof and miserly window ; but to be out of Mrs. Bradley’s sight and hearing, and to have Frolic with her were far preferable, in her opinion, to a feast of the most delicate cakes and fruits.

The under-housemaid put the child to bed as speedily as she could, and retired the instant her task was completed, in obedience to Mrs.

Bradley's orders, as she was leaving the school-room; and Grace was left to cry herself to sleep as she had done for the two preceding nights, and to wake it seemed with fresh cause for sorrow.

"Where is Grace?" asked Mr. Bradley, on entering the drawing-room after dinner.

Mrs. Bradley deigned no reply, not choosing to shew any interest in the child thus forced upon her; and Miss Heywood took upon herself to answer, pleased at an opportunity of displaying her elocution, an opportunity which Mr. Bradley afforded her as rarely as possibly.

"Overcome by the languor and fatigue caused by prolonged motion, your little protégée was disposed to recruit her much exhausted powers, by ——"

"Going to bed, I suppose," interrupted Mr. Bradley, who had seldom the patience to hear out one of Miss Heywood's declamations. "I hope she made a good dinner first though, eh,

Harriet?" he continued, hoping to obtain from his daughter, a shorter and plainer answer than from her governess.

"Oh, no! papa, she went to bed directly when mamma asked her, and before the dinner came."

"And did no one take care that some should be sent up to her? I must look after my little cousin myself, or she stands a chance of being starved," he added, ringing the bell as he spoke, and ordering one plate of sandwiches and another of cake.

"I thought," began Miss Heywood

"To little purpose it appears," interrupted Mr. Bradley with an asperity, which that lady had never before encountered; then repenting his sharpness to one whose situation, whilst it rendered her more sensitive to slight, prevented her from resenting it, he added; "I beg your pardon Miss Heywood. No doubt you thought for the best; but I am annoyed at the want of attention shown to my little cousin,"

“ I assure you, Mr. Bradley,” again began Miss Heywood more than appeased by his apology.

“ I require no assurances,” said Mr. Bradley, whose temper had not subsided into such a calm as would admit of his listening to that lady’s intricate sentences with any tolerable patience.

“ Oh, papa! Grace does not know a note of music ; and when I asked her if she could play ‘ *Nel cor pin,*’ she said no ; but she could play blindman’s-buff and Tom Titler. Only think how funny !” exclaimed Harriet laughing immoderately, joined in her mirth by her younger sister, who could just strum two or three tunes dreadfully out of time, whilst Miss Heywood vouchsafed a dignified smile at the merriment of her talented pupils.

“ Nothing at all funny, but a very sensible answer. Better if you played more with Tom Titler, and less with Nell Corpu ;” replied her father who, having no taste for music, highly

disapproved of the time expended by his girls in strumming, for playing as yet it could not be called. "Health before the piano; and if that was the way you endeavoured to amuse the child, no wonder she was in haste to go to bed."

"*Nel cor piu*," said Miss Heywood in a correcting tone, and what she considered the most perfect Roman accent, never suspecting that Mr. Bradley's had been an intentional mistake.

"The proper Italian pronunciation I dare say, Miss Heywood, though it does not suit my English mouth. I will not be so rude as to say :

"That one tongue for one woman is surely enough,"

but I have no doubt that poor hungry Grace will be very well pleased to hear me say in the language of honest John Bull ;—I have brought you something to eat ;—and here it comes that I may make the trial," said Mr. Bradley, taking the tray from the servant and leaving the room.

“ You had better retire my dears before your father comes back, as he is not in an amiable mood to-night ; and it may be as well to say nothing more to him of this new favorite, who is all in all at present,” observed Mrs. Bradley to her daughters, suspecting that her husband’s visit to Grace would not improve his temper ; and the young ladies and their governess retired accordingly.

CHAPTER V.

“WHERE have you put Miss Trevyllian?” asked Mr. Bradley of the housekeeper, whom he met in the passage, having in vain sought the child in those rooms which he considered best fitted for her sleeping apartment.

“She is in the little end garret, sir.”

“And how dare you put my cousin in that room, which, as you know, is not thought good enough to be constantly occupied even by a servant?” questioned Mr. Bradley sternly.

"It was my mistress's order, sir, said the housekeeper boldly, aware that she had acted on sufficient authority to stand excused, though wondering what could have made her master so unusually warm.

"There must have been some mistake," muttered Mr. Bradley, as he strode on to the little garret.

"Not wishing to alarm the child by a sudden noise, he opened the door as softly as he could, and advanced on tip-toe, stooping to avoid the low, coved ceiling.

Poor Grace had sunk into a troubled slumber; but the tears still glistened on the lashes that rested on the swelled cheeks; and one little hand was placed on Frolic, who was lying on the bed beside her in a far sounder sleep than his anxious mistress; her last waking thought had been the fear lest her faithful favorite should be taken from her.

"She is a fright—there my wife was correct," thought Mr. Bradley, as he looked at

her red and swollen features. Disturbed, though not awakened by her cousin's entrance, or the gleaming of his candle, the child slightly moaned, her brow contracting with a bitter pang as she murmured ; " Dear, dear Frolic !—Papa—Mamma."

" Poor little thing !" exclaimed Mr. Bradley in the deepest pity, as the large tears rolled down her cheeks, though she still slept.

Low as were his muttered tones they roused Frolic from his slumber. The dog sprang up with a growl, and prepared to seize the intruder.

" What is the matter Frolic ?" cried the terrified child, starting up in her bed, and staring wildly on her visitor.

" Nothing, Gracey, nothing ;" replied Mr. Bradley in an endearing tone ; such as few had ever heard him use.

" You promised that Frolic should stay with me," said Grace half pleadingly, and half indignantly, throwing her arm around the dog, as if her feeble strength could have protected him.

“ I did ; and I will keep that promise, Grace.”

“ And you won’t send him to the kennel, as the lady said ?” questioned the child, looking keenly into her cousin’s face.

“ No ; he shall remain with you. Who threatened to send him to the kennel ?”

“ The lady I saw first,” answered Grace timidly ; for the bare recollection of Mrs. Bradley made her tremble.

“ I thought as much ; but you need fear no separation from Frolic.”

“ Oh, then ! I will love you so much !—so very much !” cried the child, clasping her hands in an exstasy of gratitude.

“ She is not such a fright after all,” thought Mr. Bradley, his eyes twinkling at her grateful words.

“ I hope you will always love me, Grace ; and see, I have brought you some cake and sandwiches ; for they tell me you went to bed without any dinner. Are you hungry ?”

“Yes very hungry; and poor Frolic too,” said the child, looking with eager eyes on the two plates.

“So I thought; well, stop a moment, and I will make you comfortable,” and folding her travelling cloak round the shivering girl as she sat up in bed, he placed the waiter before her, and then watched with delight how much she enjoyed what he had brought, which she divided with Frolic, only giving him the largest share, and calling on her cousin with all the freedom of love and confidence to see how genteely he took what she gave him, eating as she said, quite like a little lady; and not even looking greedy.

Nothing could have more clearly proved the interest that Bradley felt for his little charge, than his sitting beside her whilst she ate, laughing with her and praising Frolic, yet never once hurrying her meal, though the bailiff was waiting for him in his study to settle the bills for the last two months, and

give an account of the crops, cattle, &c. He certainly had one of the kindest hearts that ever beat within a human bosom ; and if, as we have before hinted, he did not on ordinary occasions show much genius for entertaining children, on the present evening his defects on this point were not perceptible, as Grace's hunger and Frolic's very elegant style of eating furnished sufficient matter for talking and laughing without a recurrence to any other subject. "Now, Gracey, good night ! go to sleep—be a good girl, and don't cry in the morning. And remember that you are to breakfast with me," said Bradley after removing the empty plates, and tucking in the clothes with the care, if not the skill of an old nurse.

"I will be very good, and try not to cry any more," lisped Grace in reply, throwing her arms round his neck, as he stooped to kiss her.

"You have put my cousin, the child confided to my care, into a small garret, which, having

no chimney, and scarcely any window, is considered too unwholesome to be used as a constant sleeping apartment even by those inured to hardships," said Mr. Bradley to his wife, re-entering the drawing-room before he joined the bailiff in his study. "She should have been in the room next to the girls, and there I desire that she may be for the future. Once more I repeat that Grace Trevyllian shall be treated as one of our own children. Common humanity should have taught you this without my interference; and remember, that where Grace is, there shall Frolic be also."

"You gave me such a short notice; and a dog spoils all good furniture, sleeping about on chairs and beds," stammered forth Mrs. Bradley confused by her husband's unusual sternness.

"If you have no better excuse than that, say nothing more on the subject. The white room, as you call it, could have been as soon got

ready as the garret ; and, when you gave the order, you knew nothing of Frolic."

"There were other reasons," said Mrs. Bradley, rallying her courage, though she did not dare encounter her husband's rebuking look. "The white room is, as you know, the favourite apartment of Miss Tennant, Eliza's rich godmother, who is coming next week ; indeed all the best rooms will be wanted then, so that the child must have been moved ; which gives a great deal of trouble."

"You are always reckoning on people leaving you legacies which they never do ; but if Miss Tennant were as rich as a miser, and as liberal as a spendthrift, that is no reason why my cousin should pine away in an unhealthy room. I merely remarked to the housekeeper, who told me where to find Grace, that there must have been some mistake ; let it be your care to-morrow to rectify that mistake."

“Oh! certainly, my dear; I did not comprehend the immense importance of Miss Grace Trevyllian; she shall have the best apartment over the drawing-room, since you desire it: any thing to please you. I never dispute your will.”

“I wish I found it so; in this instance, at least, it shall be obeyed. Let the child have a healthy apartment:—if you put her in the best room to provoke me, she shall remain there. To ask you to shew her kindness I see would be hopeless; I must command it; and you know that on some points I will have my commands fulfilled.”

So saying Mr. Bradley left the room, and soon forgot his vexation in the pleasure of hearing that his farm looked better than any other in the neighbourhood, and that a new drill, which he particularly patronised, was increasing in reputation.

Mrs. Bradley knew, as her husband had said, that there were points on which he would

be obeyed, and she understood from his determined tone that this was one of those rare occasions when opposition would not only be useless but highly impolitic, as being likely to endanger the influence she enjoyed on almost every subject unconnected with agriculture and its adjuncts. She therefore decided at once on removing the child to the white room ; but the flush of anger deepened at being thus compelled to yield ; whilst her heart nourished a sharper enmity towards the innocent cause of her humiliation. The change of apartment was effected with a secret resolution on the part of the lady of the mansion to remove the child on the first plausible opportunity, if not to the garret which she had before inhabited, to one but little larger, and nearly as distant from the rest of the family. Nor was her secret resolution confined to this apparently insignificant point ; she resolved that the child should be made to feel her dependance in every possible way ; a determination put into practice with a

zeal and constancy worthy of a better object. Mrs. Bradley's infirmity of temper might occasionally lead her into a bold and open opposition to her husband; but she was too well aware of the impolicy of such a proceeding to continue it to any dangerous extent.

To say to Mr. Bradley—'you shall not'—was almost certain of producing the instant reply—'I will'; but by quiet, yet constant hints and inuendoes, coaxing, and teazings, you could persuade, or torment Mr. Bradley into almost any thing in the end, however great his opposition in the beginning; and this is the mode that I should recommend to all ladies who would rule their husbands. The sturdy rock withstands the occasional shocks of mighty waves, but yields to the constant dripping of the tiny rill. Or rather I would give far wiser advice, and say, seek not to rule your lords at all. Our doom is submission; and a wise doom we must believe it, since decreed by the all good, and the all seeing;

and a happy doom too, to my mind, for all who have married from esteem and affection, not for wealth or station; and those last deserve not happiness. The sweets of wedded life are turned to sours as soon as a woman seeks to rule; its joys wrecked, destroyed, when she ceases, though but in her own mind, to honour as well as to love him to whom she pledged her maiden faith. I speak not here of the occasional wish to accomplish a desired object; that all must have, though that desired object should be instantly and generously yielded, if its accomplishment can pain another; but I speak of the wish for habitual rule. To gentlemen I leave the task of pointing out the duties of husbands—I only offer counsel to my own sex.

Grace kept her word of trying not to cry, and was very tolerably merry whilst with Mr. Bradley, who delighted her by his praises of Frolic's tricks; but when she was left in the school-room to the care of Miss Heywood and

her pupils, with a strict charge to do their utmost to amuse her, and not tease her with lessons for two or three days, her spirits failed; and the tears again rolled down her cheeks, as, creeping away from the formal governess and her staring cousins, she cuddled up in a corner, making herself as small as possible to escape the observation of Mrs. Bradley, should she enter the apartment.

Poor child! she little knew what years of misery it was her lot to bear—of what bitter anguish that very school-room was to be the scene.

Mr. Bradley's conduct with regard to Grace, excepting a little over-warmth in the address to his Lady, had been kind and judicious; and the continuance of such conduct would have ensured, to a certain extent, the comfort, if not the absolute happiness, of his little *protégée*; but it was just exactly this perseverance in judicious kindness which was not to be expected from the owner of Elmwood Lodge. He

was not an undecided, but, except in his favorite pursuit of agriculture, he was an indolent man; and to this indolence was his wife chiefly indebted for maintaining her rule. He did not like many things which she proposed and executed; but it was less trouble to yield than to contend; so that unless roused to determined opposition by her irritating manner, or some generous purpose, he allowed her to order and counter order pretty much as she pleased.

“When master’s back is up let him have it all his own way; it won’t last long; and you can have it all your own to-morrow;” was the remark of the bailiff, who had been long in his service;—and the bailiff was right.

Mr. Bradley objected to many of his wife’s worldly maxims, and yet he let her impress them on the minds of his children, only occasionally expressing his dissent, instead of constantly and seriously endeavouring to counteract their influence. He had approved of the former governess, a most estimable woman,

yet he allowed his lady to displace her on a frivolous pretence, though convinced that her only fault was not being sufficiently submissive and complimentary :—he had a mean opinion of the present governess, and yet he permitted her to remain with his children, though more than suspecting that she was a pompous fool and subservient flatterer :—he knew that their yearly expences, owing to his lady's taste for show and company, even now, when the education of his children was at its lowest rate, exceeded their yearly income ; yet he permitted his wife to accept and issue invitations, order furniture, and improvements, at her good or evil pleasure ;—he saw that Grace had incurred the enmity of his lady, and was not therefore likely to be in favor with Miss Heywood and her pupils, yet, after the first, he interfered no further to ensure her comfort, contenting himself with a kind greeting when they met ; a second glance to be assured that she was not crying, and that Frolic was near ; and an en-

quiry how the book got on, with an excusing remark, when told by Miss Heywood or Mrs. Bradley that she could not, or would not learn. For three days he made room for the child to sit beside him ; but the fourth he was too much engaged in studying an agricultural report even to remark her presence ; and the timid Grace, hurt by the taunts of her cousins, who accused her of coaxing and currying favor with their papa, because he included her when making presents, not venturing to approach uncalled, the habit was broken through, and not again resumed.

He knew that the child was clothed and fed—he believed her to be taught at least as well as his own daughters, and, making no minute enquiries, never guessed the daily martyrdom to which she was subjected ; taunted, ridiculed by Harriet and Eliza, talked at and punished by Mrs. Bradley and Miss Heywood. The latter thought it quite enough to instruct the Misses Bradley without wasting much of her

ime, for so she considered it, on Grace, who, to tell the truth, was very backward in book learning, and not very quick in acquiring it under the governess's tuition. Her delicate health and consequent dependence on those older than herself for care and amusement, had developed her affections beyond her intellect; and, though she had far more thought than many children of double her age, that was an acquirement which made no show, and could only be appreciated by the discerning few.

In memory alone, or memory by itself, memory, as the school-spellers say, or used to say, mere memory—she was very inferior to her cousins; she could not repeat whole pages of bare chronology, or go through all the principal rules of Murray's Grammar without stopping; her's was the memory of the imagination, and the heart; and one or the other must be interested, before she could learn with facility.

She did not care whether the battle of Hastings, merely as the battle of Hastings, took

place in October 1066, or December 1077 ; and therefore the date was forgotten ; but she remembered afterwards, when reading to herself, the circumstance of William's fall on landing, and ready reply ; and the death of his son whilst hunting in that very New Forest, which he depopulated and planted, throwing down churches and houses to form a royal chace. She could not remember that—"when the relative is preceded by two nominatives of different persons, the relative and verb may agree in person with either, according to the sense," because it was never explained to her, which was the relative, and which was the nominative.

Miss Heywood's pupils were to repeat the words contained in the books from which she instructed them ; those books were good, but to understand them herself, or provide for her scholars doing so, was not in the bond. Grace could not run on with a long list of names and dates to which no one idea, no trait of courage

or affection was annexed ; she had not, as we said before, a good mechanical memory ; and moreover, she was so confounded and abashed when standing with folded arms before her formal, and unfriendly instructress, that she could rarely repeat six lines without stammering or stopping ; and was generally told to look over her lesson again, with the consolatory and encouraging addition that—" a dunce she was, and a dunce she would always remain."

This short and plain assertion, for Miss Heywood never wasted her studied eloquence on such an unprofitable object as the poor dependant cousin, except when others were present to applaud, became, from frequent repetition, the established opinion of the whole household, with the exception perhaps of Mr. Bradley, whose former partiality prevented his being quite convinced of the fact, notwithstanding his wife and Miss Heywood strove to satisfy him of the correctness of their verdict, by calling on

Grace to repeat her morning's lesson in his hearing, on which occasions, terrified by the presence of those who ever judged her harshly, she invariably broke down before the end of the second line.

“Ay, some never can make much of book learning, yet are no dunces either. I was not very quick with my lessons myself;” would Mr. Bradley remark, patting Grace on the head; adding, when the poor girl was out of hearing,—“do not tease her, Miss Heywood; she is but a delicate child, and a taste for learning may come bye and bye, if we do not disgust her with her book now.”

On this advice the governess acted, setting the lessons day by day, as a matter of form, which could not be omitted, calling on her to say them as another form; but caring little whether she knew them or not; generally returning the book with the sentence—“As usual you cannot repeat three lines. Upon my word you are enough to try the patience of a saint,”

and never calling her to make a second attempt, except, when having been worried into ill-humour by the sullenness or inattention of one of the Misses Bradley, she would vent her anger by tormenting Grace Trevyllian.

In learning her notes, those stepping stones to heavenly harmony, she showed herself most particularly stupid, agreeing with Mr. Bradley that it was far more pleasant to play Tom Titler than Nell Corpu ; and as she was generally left to practise by herself, or was so frightened when overlooked as to play every note but the right, it is not astonishing that she progressed but slowly. In only one branch of her education could Miss Heywood give a satisfactory report :—for caligraphy she really appeared to have great talents, and greater application ; but the secret of this was soon revealed, at least to Mr. Bradley.

No sooner were her pot hooks and hangers pronounced legible, than waylaying that gentleman at his study door she requested permission to write to her parents and Julia, waiting for his

reply with downcast looks, and a quickly beating heart; for it was long since she had ventured to address him, unaddressed.

“To be sure, Gracey! come in and tell me what you want,” said Mr. Bradley, kindly, struck with her pallid cheek and faltering tone. “Your papa and mamma are poor, and letters to India cost something; and the Gunnings, with their thousands a year, think a great deal of postage; but I daresay I shall be able to send by a private hand. They are all well, and desire their love, as I told you the other day.”

“Thank you;” said Grace; but she said it with a sigh, thinking that they might have sent a longer message, or a letter.

“Will you give me two sheets of paper, and not tell Mrs. Bradley, or Miss Heywood? I can write whilst they are all gone to the horsemanship; and they will know nothing about it;” continued the child, encouraged by his kindness.

“Would not you like to go with them to the horsemanship?”

“Oh, no ; I would rather write my letters,” replied Grace, who never felt at ease in the presence of Mrs. Bradley.

“You are a dull, unsociable little thing, always moping alone in the library, or the walks. How comes this child? Harriet and Eliza are not cross to you I hope.”

“No,” said Grace, too generous to complain, “but I like to be alone with Frolic, and then I can think of dear papa and mamma, and dear Julia ;” her eyes filling with tears as she spoke.

“You are a good little thing, though you cannot learn ;” said her kind hearted cousin, chucking her under the chin. “There, make haste — write your letters, and bring them to me that I may seal them.”

Away went Grace to her pot-hooks and hangers (I hope they were better formed than those just traced by my own pen, or her correspondents were to be pitied) and whilst thus

employed she was happy, pouring forth the fulness of her young affection with all the simple eloquence of childhood, and anticipating the time when they should meet again.

The slight suspicion that Grace sought to be alone, because unkindly treated by her cousins, which had glanced across Mr. Bradley, was hushed by the child's ready, no ; but had he investigated further he would have found that never but when alone was she quite safe from sneers and harsh rebukes. That she was a poor cousin, dependant on the Bradleys for food and raiment—a charity child—was impressed upon her every hour. She must touch no toy or book without the permission of the Misses Bradley—she must instantly give up every thing which they desired ; if permitted to play with them, she must submit with humility to their caprices. But for their papa must not she starve, or go to the poor-house, and did she dare to dispute with them, or claim any plaything as her own ?

The Misses Bradley's bed room was a show bed room, with its large, cheerful windows, French couches, frilled sheets, prettily arranged dressing tables, and rosewood book shelves. Grace Trevyllian's was any thing but a show room, with its small window, ugly bed, coved ceiling, and plain and scanty furniture. It was not the apartment in which she had slept, the first night of her arrival, but the one adjoining; rather larger, and boasting a chimney, which smoked unbearably the only time it was ever put to the trial. Hither had Grace been soon removed under the pretence that the white room was required for others; and here she remained, Mr. Bradley having forgotten to make enquiries on the subject.

The Misses Bradley were always dressed with care and in the fashion;—Grace Trevyllian was generally clothed in the garments that they had outgrown, either unaltered, or altered so carelessly as not to fit; and if Mr. Bradley remarked that her clothes looked ill made, the

blame was laid on her being careless and slovenly.

Nor were these the only vexations and indignities to which poor Grace was subjected. Day after day did she hear herself described to visitors, who, struck by her sickly appearance, asked her name, as a poor child taken from charity, whose father and mother being in debt were obliged to go to the East;—a child so stupid, sullen, and obstinate that Mrs. Bradley feared they should never be able to make any thing of her.

Then she had all the epidemics to which children are liable; measles, hooping cough, &c. &c.; and there was she left in her little dull garret alone, or crouched in a corner of the school-room, hour after hour, with nothing to amuse her but the affectionate Frolic, or a few books smuggled in by the good natured Ann, the under housemaid, who, taking pity on the neglected child, waited upon her without orders; and all this when the Misses Bradley

had every luxury that childish fancy could desire. How did Grace weep at these times, thinking of the contrast; and long for her own dear papa and mamma, or Nurse Pangbourne to hold her aching head, and smooth her pillow, hushing her to sleep with words of love ! How did she sigh even for kind Mr. Bradley's return, who unluckily, happened to be absent when she suffered most !

Then in the holydays when the boys were at home she had fresh and sometimes harder trials to endure ; for to her Henry and Stephen were objects of dread and dislike on account of their rude, boisterous manners, and overbearing dispositions ; but it was for Frolic she feared far more than herself. Boys, unless brought up more judiciously than were Mrs. Bradley's, are generally inclined to despise and tyrannise over their sisters ; but as Harriet and Eliza were powerfully protected by their mother and governess, these principally

exhibited their taste for despotism in tormenting Grace, who could not defend herself; and was too timid to complain to Mr. Bradley, in whose presence they never dared annoy her. Their ill treatment of herself she bore in silence; but when they attempted to persecute Frolic to vex her, and punish the dog for not following them as they desired, she was roused to resistance, and spoke so resolutely, threatening to appeal to their father, that not daring to urge her further they contented themselves with giving the spaniel a sly kick or stroke with the whip whenever they could accomplish either, without being suspected as the culprits. Fortunately for Frolic his judicious education, quiet disposition, devoted attachment to his young mistress, and the quick perception possessed by dogs of who are friends, and who are foes, saved him from much ill usage; and subdued the enmity of which he would otherwise have been the object. Frolic never

jumped on chair, sofa or bed, except in his mistress's room when she was ill; never quarrelled with other dogs, never stretched himself before the fire, when men, or boys who aped their elders, wished to occupy the rug; always avoided Mrs. Bradley and her sons; in short always crept as close to Grace as he could, showing a most valuable talent of never getting under people's feet, or in their way; but receiving all marks of attention with a grave and decorous gratitude.

Harriet and Eliza were not very ill tempered or disobliging to each other, Henry amid all the rudeness and tyranny of a school boy towards girls, which he considered mannish, occasionally exhibited symptoms of a better and more generous spirit, whilst Stephen showed to many a winning politeness; but all agreed in trampling on the unresisting Grace, calling her fright and dunce, sullen and stupid.

What wonder if the child under such treat-

ment became what they called her ! How could she be beautiful, when no—

“ Joy ever danced in her dark eye.”—

no smile ever wreathed those thin, white lips ? How could she fail to be a dunce, when none took pains to teach her—none cared if she improved—none lured her on to learning by the words of praise ? How could she fail to be sullen and stupid, when none heeded if she wept or laughed, and when she spoke taunted or mocked ? What wonder if she were stunted in the growth of mind and body ? her young affections chilled, disdained, thrown back upon herself, eating her very life away ;—youth’s generous impulses all checked by coldness and dependant poverty,—the buoyant spirit of her childhood broken—crushed—ground down into the earth ? the marvel was that she survived, wearing away long years in almost hopeless misery.

Praise is too often made the machinery of

learning; it should rather be considered as the oil to set the wheels of the human mind in motion, used not with a wasteful but a sparing and judicious hand;—with too much or too little oil the wheels have an irregular, and unprofitable action.

What a change might have been effected in Grace had a thousandth part of the affection lavished on her cousins been bestowed on her! But the words of praise never fell on her ear—the accents of love never melted her heart;—affection became to her a strange, almost forgotten thing; or when remembered, its memory only gave the present the power to inflict a sharper pang.

Eighteen months had elapsed since her first arrival at Elmwood Lodge, when she was unexpectedly summoned to the drawing room.

“I am come at last you see, as I promised!” exclaimed the warm hearted Rawdon.

Grace, who had entered with her usual frightened, awkward manner, expecting noth-

ing less than a scolding from Mrs. Bradley, looked up at these words, and meeting the affectionate glance of her old favorite, sprang into his arms, and clinging round his neck with a passionate flood of tears, murmured between her sobs, "dear, dear, Captain Rawdon—papa—mamma—Julia."

"There is no breaking the poor child of these bursts of weeping; she has never got over the parting with her parents and sister, and will never be well or happy till she can rejoin them," observed Mrs. Bradley in a pitying tone, wishing to play the amiable before a stranger, and still more devoutly wishing that this stranger would repeat her words and rid her of her troublesome charge.

"Oh take me to them!" sobbed poor Grace.

"Alas! dear child, that is impossible! and it is all my fault," replied Rawdon pressing the weeping girl still closer to his heart. "But hush, Gracey, my little wife, I cannot bear to

hear you sob. See I have brought you this chain and locket containing Julia's hair and mine."

"Thank you ! Thank you !" cried the grateful child, eagerly seizing the trinket, and gazing on it, not with the triumphant gaze of vanity ; but with the thrilling look of affection.

"Has dear Julia written me a letter ?" she asked.

"She had not time for that ; but she sent her love. I could not stay with her five minutes, and cannot stay longer with you, my regiment having been unexpectedly ordered abroad ; as it is, I shall scarcely reach Portsmouth in time ; but I could not leave England without seeing you."

As he spoke he felt the child cling to him with a convulsive shudder. At that moment Mrs. Bradley was called from the room. Grace listened breathlessly till the door closed behind

her, and then she said in a deep, earnest whisper. "Take me with you! Oh take me with you!"

"Impossible!" replied Rawdon.

"Oh do, do!" exclaimed the child with passionate energy, clasping her hands. "No body loves me here—no one but poor Frolic," looking down at the dog, that was fawning on Rawdon. "Do take me with you! I will be so good!—and never cry then."

"It cannot be, Gracey; you know not what you ask," replied Rawdon gently, the tears starting to his own eyes at her touching appeal.

The poor child's clasped hands relaxed, her head sank on Rawdon's shoulder—her lips and cheeks turned pale as marble, and she scarcely seemed to breathe.

What could a poor Captain of foot do with a girl of seven years old in foreign lands? Yet wild as was the project of taking the child,

for some moments Rawdon considered its practicability.

"Are you not happy, Grace?" he asked.

"Happy? Oh no!"

"Is not Mr. Bradley kind to you?"

"Yes, very kind!" replied Grace warmly, her affectionate heart never forgetting a kindness.

Before he could question further Mrs. Bradley returned, and Grace's energy was gone.

"I cannot take you with me, dear child;" whispered Rawdon. "If you were older you would understand the impossibility of such a plan."

Grace made no fresh request; but her sobs came so fast as almost to choke her, though she gradually grew more composed, calmed by Rawdon's soothing caresses.

"Three o'clock! and I should have been miles on my journey by this time," exclaimed Captain Rawdon starting up. "Good bye,

Gracey, my little wife! I must make a fortune and come back and claim you, God bless you, dear child!" he added in a faltering voice, as kissing the sobbing Grace again and again he gently unclosed her clinging arms, and hurried from the room to hide his own emotion. Her tears and passionate entreaty had quite overcome him, though satisfied by her assertion of Mr. Bradley's kindness, and Mrs. Bradley's bland and friendly manner, he attributed her unhappiness to the separation from her parents and Julia, an evil which he could not remedy.

As Grace caught the sound of the closing of the carriage door she sprang to the window, watching the departing chaise with tearless, breathless sorrow, till the intervening trees concealed it from her view.

"Don't stand idling there; but go back to the school-room," cried Mrs. Bradley sharply.

Grace turned at that dreaded voice, and for once met the speaker's eye; but with a look

so strange, so wild, so wretched, that Mrs. Bradley was alarmed and somewhat touched.

“Or go to your own room till tea time if you like it better;” she added with unusual gentleness.

Grace quitted the apartment without a word, and walked to her little room, not with the noiseless creeping step of fear, but with the slow heavy tread of a deep woe that had absorbed all dread. She had unconsciously indulged the hope that this long promised visit of Rawdon’s would bring some amelioration to her hard lot; and now he had been there—and he was gone!—gone for years, and far away, and she was left to all her former wretchedness. If Rawdon could not help her, there was none who could; and she must bear taunts and ill temper as before.

And she did bear them month after month; year after year, creeping away when she could with Frolic into the library, where she was seldom disturbed, (the present generation of

Bradleys not being a reading generation), or if seen permitted to remain on condition of dusting the books. And here she sat poring over works above her age, taxing her mind to its utmost powers to understand them ; now sympathising with the hero and the patriot, her pale cheek glowing with enthusiasm ; then drinking in with a thirsting spirit and a passionate love for the ideal the golden dreams of poets, their glorious visions, and their thrilling hopes ; or, if the season of the year allowed, she would seek out some sunny spot where she might bask beneath the light and warmth ; or, sporting with her favorite, twine wreaths of the sweet wild flowers to hang around his neck. Thus passed the life of the neglected child, her happiest moments when her very existence was forgotten by all beside ; and she could sit apart the sense of her loneliness and desolation lost in her sympathy with the hopes, the thoughts, the aspirations of the glorious, and the good ; or that loneliness peopled by

imagination with those she loved ;—her desolation brightened by brilliant visions of the future. The chain and locket never left her neck ; night and day it was there, linking her as it seemed to the few who loved her. In the rainbow hopes of the future, and in the touching, and still more beautiful memories of the past, she strove to forget the gloomy present.

Thus passed the life of the fright—the dunce—the sullen—and the stupid.

CHAPTER VI.

IF my readers dislike lessons as much as I did in my younger days they will make no objection to my skipping over intervening years, and resuming my tale at a more interesting period. To tell the truth, I found nearly as much difficulty as did poor Grace in committing to memory pages of chronology, geography, and grammar ; of which last, at the time, I did not understand a sentence, the only learning I patronised being pet pieces of poetry and history ; and as my horror of tasks, as I

used to term them to the scandal of a young friend, is not even now quite overcome, we will if you please suppose Grace arrived at her fifteenth year, and the ages of the rest of her friends and acquaintances advanced in the same proportion.

Years have passed away but few events have occurred during their progress. A bright fire is blazing in the drawing-room at Elmwood Lodge, and Mrs. Bradley, little altered by time, is sitting at a work table grounding in a nest of doves, traced in lambswool by the eloquent Miss Heywood, who still retains her station in the family. Harriet, a fine showy girl in her eighteenth year is netting a purse, when not employed in arranging her curls by the aid of an opposite mirror ;—her sister, a few months younger, and some think as pretty, is copying music at a table a little apart, all in company clothes and company looks ; whilst Grace, the poor, neglected Grace, as little grown as one could well imagine ; thin, sallow,

with ill made garments badly put on, and straight dark hair pushed back behind her ears is seated near the window in her usual frightened position, half sitting and half crouching, taking no note of those around her, but gazing eagerly out towards the lodge, a sudden flush coming occasionally into her hollow cheek and a gleam into her sunken eye as the distant rumbling of a carriage strikes on her hearing;—then glow and gleam both die away, as the sound grows faint and fainter.

Need we say that Grace is expecting the arrival of one of the few,—the very few, whom she loves with her whole heart; that heart so constant so unselfish?—That day the Gunnings were to visit Elmwood Lodge, and Grace and Julia were to meet for the first time since their first parting. No words could describe the eager, the impatient longing, yet the half shrinking, the involuntary doubt lest Julia should be grown a fine lady, as Mrs. Bradley had asserted, and despise her stupid,

ugly sister ; the chilly fear, and then the thrilling hope which succeeded each other in the mind of the loving girl, as she watched for the expected visitors. Some hearts may have felt all this, and even after the passing of long years may beat the quicker at the thought ; but no words can make it understood by those who have never felt it :—the heart has a language of its own with which the pen and the tongue intermeddle not.

But there was one circumstance connected with Grace which was more remarkable even than her unusual excitement ; Frolic, her heretofore inseparable companion, was not by her side. Could she too with years have changed as worldlings do ? Was her old favorite forgotten, or had Mrs. Bradley succeeded in depriving her of her sole consolation.—Neither ; poor Frolic was ill, so ill that even his young mistress scarcely hoped that he could long survive ; but her care and affection were only increased by her fear of losing him.

“ Here is a surprise for you, my dear !” said Mr. Bradley to his lady, entering the room with an open note in his hand.

“ Your pet plough was pronounced perfection at the last agricultural meeting, I suppose,” replied Mrs. Bradley coolly.

“ You are all in the wrong, most sagacious wife,” observed her husband, not particularly pleased at her allusion to the pet plough which was considered by many a positive failure. “ Mr. Rolleston being on his way home proposes spending two or three days at Elmwood Lodge, if agreeable to us ; and waits my answer at the half-way house.”

“ A surprise indeed ! and a very pleasant one ;—yet how unlucky !” exclaimed the lady, triumph and vexation mingling in her tone. “ That he should have chosen this week of all weeks in the year, when we are expecting the Gunnings with Julia Trevyllian ; but for their coming we might have sent Grace out of the way. Could we put off the Gunnings ? The

Dudleys Mr. Rolleston would not mind meeting.”—In this perhaps the lady was mistaken—“What shall we do?” she questioned in a great fuss, provoked with her husband for not being in an equal fidget.

“Just do nothing, my dear; but let matters take their course. The Gunnings being expected every moment cannot be put off; and as for sending Grace away, I shall do no such thing; he must know of her being here; and it is for him to feel shame at the meeting not us. If you can arrange a bed for Rolleston, I will write and say that we shall be happy to see him, stating indirectly in my note whom we expect, thus leaving him to come or go as he shall think best.”

“Arrange a bed?—to be sure we must, if some of us have to sleep out; such an opportunity of conciliating him must not be lost; but pray say nothing of the Gunnings, or you may be sure he will not come; and remember their last note left their arrival uncertain.”

“ Wife, wife.” — ‘Honesty is the best policy!’ ” replied her husband reprovingly.

“ I do not believe any such thing,” observed Mrs. Bradley sharply, “you are always getting into scrapes by what you call your honesty. He does not ask if you have any visitors, and the naming them may seem as much as to say our house is full; but if you must come, you must. Should he find it disagreeable he can go away. It is very provoking that one cannot put off the Gunnings.”

Mr. Bradley would have preferred perfect sincerity; but, as usual, yielded to his wife, and the Gunnings and Dudleys were not named in the note to Mr. Rolleston.

Minute after minute passed away, and Grace grew more anxious and impatient, as might be seen by the more fitful changing of her cheek, had any been sufficiently interested in her feelings to remark whether that thin cheek was flushed or pale.

A carriage appeared in sight;—Grace’s

hands were involuntarily clasped, as she bent more eagerly forward. It came nearer, and nearer ; near enough for her to distinguish the long face of a gentleman beyond middle age, who by sitting forward, prevented her catching a glimpse of his travelling companions. That must be Mr. Gunning. She looked more keenly, and, as the road turned, caught sight of another face resembling that which she had seen before ; but not so long, and far more youthful, the face of a youth about nineteen. Instead of Mr. Gunning then the person whom she had first seen was Mr. Dudley ; and the last his son. She never raised her eyes when the strangers entered the room. What were they to her, but the messengers of disappointment ? Thinking only of her meeting with Julia, she had not contemplated the possibility, or rather probability of the Gunnings, who were proverbially late people, arriving the last of the expected visitors, and now paid no attention to the slow, formal greeting of the elder

gentlemen to Mrs. Bradley, and her daughters ; or the as formal bow of the younger. They were not those whom she longed to behold :— and before their greetings were concluded she had almost forgotten their presence, and was again looking anxiously out towards the lodge.

Another carriage came in view—it contained but one traveller ; and the chill that crept over her as she caught a glimpse of those haughty features told her that it was Mr. Rolleston—her father's harsh and inflexible uncle—he whom she had seen but once before, when her mother knelt at his feet ;—he at whose name alone she shuddered, for the terror of that meeting had never been forgotten. Involuntarily she shrank into the embrasure of the window, listening breathlessly for his approach, yet not venturing to look upon him even when she heard him uttering cold courtesies to Mrs. Bradley, deigning only bows to the young ladies and the Dudleys ; such bows to the latter as struck his not clear sighted host with

surprise annoyed the formal father, and embarrassed the awkward son, who, having been entirely brought up at home in a lonely part of the country, felt any thing but at ease among so many strangers.

Finding that no notice was taken of herself, the terrified Grace, recovering gradually from the awe inspired by her dreaded great uncle, a third time turned to her eager watching—a watching more anxious than before, as she began to fear there might be some truth in Mrs. Bradley's remark, and that the Gunnings might not arrive.

She was not so completely unnoticed as she imagined; but the questions concerning her and the consequent replies never reached her ear, so fully were all her faculties engaged in expectation; and so loudly was Mr. Bradley discussing agriculture with Mr. Dudley, the most patient of listeners from that very slowness which made him the most tiresome of speakers.

“Is that young lady in the corner another of your daughters, Mrs. Bradley?” enquired Mr. Rolleston, after enduring for some time that lady’s expressions of delight at his unexpected visit.

“Oh, dear no!” replied his hostess with a look and tone which said—‘how could you believe such a little awkward fright as that to be a child of mine? Look at me and my tall fair girls—mark the contrast, and blush for having asked such an unpardonable question.’ —“That is no daughter of mine, thank heaven! It is Grace Trevyllian. Mr. Bradley, who always goes hand over head, in an unlucky moment, before he knew particulars, offered to take charge of the child; an offer snapped at, as you may suppose. I was very much against the plan, and did all I could to dissuade my husband from having her here, particularly after hearing of your nephew’s ungrateful, I may say unnatural conduct to you, who had been as a father to him; but he

considered his honor engaged, and could not retract, though regretting his imprudence. As the Trevyllians have been gone now nearly ten years, I hope they will soon reclaim her; for she has caused me nothing but trouble and anxiety; always sickly, and so stupid, that there is no improving her mind or body, though she has received the same advantages as Harriet and Eliza. I hope my husband will take warning for the future;—it is no slight annoyance to be saddled with a child, and such a child! against one's will for so many years."

"Mr. Bradley is an honorable man!" observed Mr. Rolleston.

There was a something in this brief reply, a fancied emphasis upon the Mr., which caused the lady's cheek to flush as she paused to consider the meaning of his words.

"What is the matter?" she asked in some surprise, a few moments after, as Grace, having watched the approach of a third carriage, and satisfied herself that it contained two

ladies and a gentleman forgetting that others were in the room sprang from the corner into which she had shrunk, and made a rush towards the door.

“ Julia—dear Julia is come !” exclaimed poor Grace, for once raising her eyes, those large, dark eyes, the only tolerable features in her face, and truly, as the ancients said, the windows of the soul, and meeting unabashed, in her joyous excitement, the wondering and reproving stare of Mrs. Bradley, and the cold, keen, gaze of Mr. Rolleston.

“ What then? Where are you going to, flying across the room in that unladylike manner ?”

“ I am going to meet Julia,” replied Grace, evidently surprised that any one could doubt or disapprove of her intention.

“ Folly ! Go back to your seat ! and wait till Julia has entered the room and spoken to those older than yourself. What would she and Mrs. Gunning think of such country

hoydenism? I wish you would take example' from your cousins ; but that you never do in any thing," observed Mrs. Bradley rebukingly, though in a soft, low tone, wishing Mr. Rolleston to admire the blandness with which she could reprove ; and at the same time to understand that his great niece was held in no especial favor. Those speaking eyes so full of the heart's sweetest, best emotions were again bent on the ground ; and poor Grace drew back to her corner with her former frightened air, moving even more awkwardly than was her wont, yielding to her long habit of submission.

"Are the Gunnings and Julia Trevyllian expected?" asked Mr. Rolleston of his flushed and embarrassed hostess in an unvarying tone in which she could read no feeling, that might influence her answer.

"I am sorry to say they are, much to my vexation, particularly under present circumstances. They proposed coming some months

ago, the sisters not having met since their parents went to India, and Mr. Bradley, who never considers, and cannot bear to say 'no;' did not like to decline the visit. There was no time to put them off on the receipt of your kind note, or we should certainly have done it. I have only seen the Gunnings once, and have no wish to improve the acquaintance; but my husband is so thoughtless and good-natured."

"Mr. Bradley is a kind man!" observed Mr. Rolleston, with the same inexplicable look and tone which had before perplexed his hostess. "Had you named the Gunnings and Dudleys in your note, you thought I might fancy some disinclination to receive me," he added after a moment's pause.

"Exactly so!" replied Mrs. Bradley, believing her guest to be pleased and flattered by her silence.

"And this consideration I must attribute to my fair hostess, I conclude, since Bradley is so thoughtless?"

“ Entirely ; my husband, thinking more of oats and barley, than of the delicate courtesies of life,” answered the lady, delighted at the view he took of the matter, and piquing herself on having proved such an able tactician.

“ You acted with your usual forethought,” replied her guest.

Further conversation was prevented by the entrance of the visitors ; first Mrs. Gunning playing the invalid, leaning on the arm of her husband, a common-place looking man with a cunning eye ; then Julia Trevyllian, one of the loveliest of beings, the fulfilment of her childhood’s promise—the realisation of a poet’s dream.

Though awed and abashed at the moment by Mrs. Bradley’s rebuke, no sooner had Julia entered the room, than Grace, forgetting all but the presence of that loved sister, whom she had so longed to see—the playmate of her happy childhood—again darting forth from her

corner rushed into her arms, clinging round her with such wild expressions of delight, that the graceful Julia, unused to such vehemence, and not recognising her sister in the thin, sallow, sickly looking girl, with a faint scream, that attracted the notice of all, endeavoured to release herself from the unwelcome embrace.

“ Grace ! Grace ! Will you never learn to behave like a lady ? ” exclaimed Mrs. Bradley, pushing the child away from her lovely visitor.

“ Is that Grace ? ” questioned Julia in surprise, recovering from her first alarm at the unexpected warmth of her reception.

“ You may well ask, Miss Trevyllian, but there are some stones so rough no care can polish them,” replied Mrs. Bradley, vexed out of her usual blandness at this unmannerly interruption to her graceful mode of performing the hostess. “ Stand away ! ” she continued, seeing that Grace, though scarlet to the very tips of her fingers, with shame and disappointment, still clung to her sister’s dress.

“ Oh, Julia ! you have forgotten me :—yet I should have known you any where—in any crowd ;”—said Grace in a tone of tender reproach, raising her eyes to her sister’s face with a look of deep and devoted affection.

“ Forgive me, dear Grace, if I did not recollect you at the moment,” said Julia kindly, kissing her cheek, “ I thought —”

“ You doubtless thought that your sister would be more like yourself in person and manner ; I regret that you should be so grievously disappointed,” observed Mrs. Bradley, closing her sentence.

“ There never was a greater contrast certainly ; one so lovely, and so graceful—the other so awkward, and such a fright,” remarked Mrs. Gunning to her husband ; but loud enough to be heard by Grace, who, shrinking at the tone, more than the words, looked up for a moment on Julia’s surpassing loveliness, then accidentally catching the reflection of her own face and figure in a large glass, struck with a

painful sense of her own inferiority involuntarily let go her sister's hand; and resuming her wonted bowed, and crouching attitude would have crept out of sight, had not Julia, seeing her distress, gently detained her, whilst she took up her defence.

“Not a fright dear aunt;” she said, leading Grace towards Mrs. Gunning with a kind, but rather patronising manner—the manner of one assured of admiration let her say or do what she would. “No one can be a fright with such large, lustrous eyes, that say such affectionate and beautiful things. Come, Gracey dear; you must look up as you looked at me just now.”

But Grace could not look up as she had done just now, for she felt that many eyes were on her, and moreover she felt that though Julia was kind, she had not the same deep and devoted affection which filled her own sad heart; so, ashamed and disappointed, she only bowed her head the lower, and clung more closely to her lovely defender, whilst tear after tear fell

down on the splendid carpet. Not tears of shame—not tears of anger—but the scalding tears that fall when the young heart feels its hopes are blighted—its strong affection scorned and trampled on—or, at the best, not valued—not returned :—the weeping of an autumn, not an April day—not followed by the sunshine of sweet smiles, giving the promise of a brighter summer.

“ There are few things, Miss Trevyllian, which you could not effect ; but making Grace a beauty, or inducing her to look up against her will are amongst those few,” observed Mrs. Bradley, with a gracious bow to her young and lovely guest, whom in her heart she wished at the top of the Andes, or the bottom of the famous Polish salt mine, or any where else sufficiently distant and inaccessible, fearful that Mr. Rolleston, whom she had been anxiously watching, would perceive her superiority over the Misses Bradley ; a superiority which even a doting mother could not deny, “ Grace my

dear, you can retire for the present, and regain composure ; your vehemence has startled and disturbed us all. Perhaps, Miss Trevyllian, not having met so long, you might like to accompany your sister."

" Let the poor child remain, my dear ; she will be better presently if you don't look at her. Grace has a very affectionate heart and cannot meet her relations with fashionable indifference ; that is all ; and as to Miss Trevyllian I have not paid her my compliments, so we can part with neither just yet," observed Mr. Bradley kindly.

" As you please, my dear," replied his wife, in her blindest tone, so arranging her guests as to place Mr. Rolleston next herself, whilst Julia, retaining the hand of the weeping Grace, took the chair brought forward by young Dudley with ready, though shy and awkward politeness.

" I am afraid you must have found Grace's folly very annoying," remarked Mrs. Bradley

to Mr. Rolleston, whilst her husband and Mr. Dudley were playing the polite to the Gunnings. "The fact is that I can make nothing of her; and most heartily regret my husband's thoughtless offer."

"It is evident that she has not profitted by your instructions; and bears no resemblance in mind or manners to yourself or your fair daughters," replied Mr. Rolleston, in a tone which his hostess chose to consider complimentary, still keeping his eye on the newly met sisters. His continued observation would not have been surprising even had their relationship to himself and each other been put out of the question; for nothing could be more striking than the contrast between those sisters as they sat together, the hand of the younger still clasping that of the elder.

Julia, as we have already said, was of such surpassing loveliness that even the most dull and churlish could not look upon her without admiration. To say that her skin was like

ivory or alabaster was to do that skin injustice, for it had a transparency and delicate glow, a life like brilliancy, that could be found in neither. Her features, of the Grecian style, were perfect in their form, whilst over her fair forehead floated a profusion of light brown curls, glossy and soft as silk, arranged with the most tasteful ease. Her figure was as perfect as her face, each movement light and graceful, whilst her soft grey eyes, which suited well with her fair complexion, could also glance and glisten with youthful mirth.

She was, as her cousin Henry Bradley asserted some hours after, a peerless and bewitching blonde, to whom one could lose one's heart at first sight, and not wish to recall it for a whole twelvemonth. But perhaps it was Julia's manner that made the contrast between the sisters still more striking than her rare beauty.

However reluctant the Gunnings might have been to take charge of their half-niece, the

encomiums lavished on her beauty by all who saw her, and the prospect of a splendid match, joined to her sweet temper, soon banished all regret for having yielded to what they termed their charitable intentions. Julia became their pride, their darling, petted, caressed, but never chidden; brought up daintily on love and praise, educated at a great expence with the idea constantly impressed upon her mind that her grace, her beauty, her accomplishments might win, and should command wealth or a coronet—or both conjoined. Had her disposition been less amiable, her temper less sweet, with such bringing up Julia Trevyllian must have been vain and overbearing to a disgusting degree; as it was her manner was peculiarly attractive; playful and self possessed, the manner of one who had been petted by affection rather than spoilt by flattery; who knew that she was lovely, and was not displeased to read her power in faltering tones, in following eyes, but who did not appear to crave after

admiration, possibly from the certainty of receiving it; and never showed envy or jealousy of others. She moved and spoke with the assured ease of one who, aware of her grace, and never having been harshly chidden, could feel no fear of offending, or being awkward. If the seeds of pride and vanity had been sown or fostered by her education, they had not yet had time to grow up into rank luxuriance; and trifling errors were not likely to be judged of hardly in one endowed with such a dazzling beauty. Such was Julia! What a different being to her who sat beside her with that frightened air, and downcast look which had become a habit; her long thin fingers clasping her sister's hand, whilst fitful blushes came and went upon that sallow cheek, as she occasionally glanced into that sister's lovely face, and then turned hastily away whilst her heart sickened at the bitter contrast. It was long since poor Grace had been cheered by the accents of affection; and though she had never

before so painfully felt the want of all personal attractions—never before been so hurt at the word—fright—yet she had so long been used to incessant chiding, that she had lost all ease and confidence of manner ; and really looked as sullen and stupid as her foes said she was. Added to this, she had no advantage of the toilette : her shoes were clumsy—her frock ill made ; and her dark brown hair was put back behind her ears without an attempted curl to soften the outline of her sharp features. It was scarcely possible to believe them sisters—the children of the same parents. If Mr. Rolleston had continued to observe them from the moment of Julia's entrance, Ernest Dudley had not been less marked in his scrutiny, but with this difference ; the old man looked on both, perhaps more at the fright ; whilst the young man paid most attention to the beauty, though he had caught Grace's look, which had elicited Julia's admiration of her speaking, earnest eyes.

Young Dudley as we have said, was in his nineteenth year, tall, shy, and unformed, in person, or manner, with a countenance that, when the mind was at rest, appeared wanting in animation; but there were times when that face was lit up with a brilliancy almost dazzling. Reared in seclusion, his father his sole tutor, and almost his sole companion, he had much book learning; but little worldly wisdom; and showed some of that father's formality, and ponderous gravity; except when stirred by some exciting interest. Unused to strangers, he felt embarrassed in their society; and so little had he seen of women, especially those of his own age, that when Julia's loveliness first broke upon him he was inclined to think her more than mortal, and stood gazing at her with open mouth, and dilated eyes, till his father checked this exhibition of his boyish wonder, by an admonition not to stare. The kindness of her manner to Grace confirming his admiration, encouraged him to address her,

when the rest of the party were talking too loud to admit of his remark being overheard by many. Julia finding Miss Bradley rather stupid, received his advances very graciously, and this modern Cymon was getting more at his ease, when the entrance of Henry and Stephen Bradley, who, after the consequent introductions, insisted on taking him to see their guns and pointers, separated him from the object of his attentions, his place being almost immediately occupied by Mr. Rolleston.

Never having failed to please when she had condescended to make the attempt, Julia endeavoured to propitiate her great uncle ; but there was a something so repelling in his unvarying tone, brief answers, and cold, keen looks, that setting him down in her own mind as a cross old frump, she turned away, and began to talk with Grace, who had regained sufficient composure not only to answer questions, but to ask them.

“ Did you receive my letter ? ” said Grace in

a low voice, believing that no one overheard her.

“ Yes, dear !”

“ But you never answered it.”

“ I had so much to do—so many masters—and my aunt said it was nonsense children writing—and—and—in short, I did not answer it ; and I must coax you to forgive me, though I see you are half vexed.”

“ Not vexed with you, dear Julia ; I am sure you would have written if you could. Have you heard from papa and mamma ? I have never had a letter, though they sent me over some play-things a long, long time ago.”

“ Oh !” they are quite well ; I can tell you that, dear Gracey ; but my aunt says it would be nonsense to write when they have nothing particular to say, as she knows none of their friends in India.”

“ Will they come home soon ?” asked Grace.

“ Oh, no ! the Indigo crops I think they say, or some such thing, have been so bad for

the last few years that they have not made as much as they expected ; and must remain in India some time longer.”

“ They will never come back—I shall never see them ;”—said Grace with a quivering lip, and a tone so sad that Julia, touched by its mournfulness, tried to cheer her.

“ Yes dear Gracey, you will : perhaps in four or five years more.”

“ Four or five years more !” repeated Grace despairingly. “ Do you think papa and mamma love us as they used to do ?” she questioned with an eager look.

“ Yes Grace ; I daresay they love us very well.”

“ Only very well, Julia ?”

“ Is not that enough, and all that we can expect ? No affection, my aunt says, will stand time and distance, without growing cooler.”

“ Say not so, dear Julia ; I love papa and mamma more every day.”

“ Do you? Ah ! but you were always a dear affectionate child.”

“ Are you happy, Julia?” asked Grace abruptly.

“ Happy ! yes very happy ! How can I be otherwise ?”

“ Ah ! then that makes the difference !” said Grace with a deep sigh.

“ What difference ?”

Grace made no reply.

“ Are you not happy ?”

“ Happy, Julia? Oh, no, no,” exclaimed her sister, in a low, hollow voice, with a timid glance towards Mrs. Bradley.

“ My poor Grace,” said Julia compassionately. I wish my aunt would ask you to come and stay with us.”

“ Oh, if she would !” exclaimed Grace clasping her hands.

“ I will coax her, Gracey ; but you must not look so wildly, or speak so energetically, for my aunt dislikes any thing so *prononcé* ; you

must learn to control your feelings. Let us talk on other subjects that you may resume your composure."

"You have not asked after poor Frolic," remarked Grace a little reproachfully a few minutes later.

"Frolic—who is Frolic?"

"Oh Julia! not remember dear old Frolic, that used to let us dress him up and make him dance; and would sit by our beds all day when we were ill."

"Now I remember; but my dear little Gracey, do not speak and look so reproachfully; I beg his pardon for not having inquired after him. I recollect you could not be pacified when my aunt sent him away; we were silly children then to make so much fuss about a dog. My aunt has such a beautiful little French poodle now that would really delight you;—the most lovely creature you ever saw; and so accomplished!—full of tricks—quite a bijou!"

“But you do not love it as well as dear old Frolic, Julia?”

“Yes, a great deal better; Frolic is quite a fright compared to Mignon.”

“And you cannot love a fright,” said Grace with a quivering lip.

“I love you very much, dear Gracey,” replied Julia, comprehending her feeling, and pressing her hand. “And you would love Mignon if you saw him.”

“No, I should not, for he has made you forget dear, good old Frolic, who was always so patient and good tempered, let us tease him as we would.”

“Well, Gracey, as I said before, you have the kindest and most affectionate heart that ever living creature had! I am afraid I shall never be half as good,” observed Julia gaily, speaking with a patronizing air to hide some little confusion at the gentle reproach. “What a treasure of a wife!—so loving!—so constant!—always preferring old friends to new ones. A pity that

Captain Rawdon is not here to claim his little bride."

"Dear, kind Captain Rawdon! Do you know where he is?" asked Grace with eagerness. "See; I always wear the chain and locket that he gave me."

"Very right," said the laughing Julia.

"Will he come back soon?" asked Grace, not heeding, from not comprehending her sister's raillery.

"I fear not: he is exchanged into another regiment, and will remain abroad some years. But do not look so sad about it, dear Gracey; or I shall really believe that you have lost your heart."

"Oh, Julia! you should not laugh at me, if others do. I know that I am a fright, and stupid and sulky, and that I do not deserve that any one should love me; but he loved me and spoke kindly, and you cannot tell how my heart beats at hearing a kind word; and how

I love the few that use them. You are happy, and so beautiful that every one loves you ; and so you cannot understand all this."

"Do not talk so strangely, and so sadly, dear Grace ; you are neither a fright, nor stupid, nor sulky, and I love you very much, and so do Mrs. Bradley and your cousins I dare say."

"Mrs. Bradley !" repeated Grace, turning away with a shudder.

"You are too sensitive, my little Gracey ; but we will talk of these things when alone. Tell me of your pet Frolic. How is he ?" questioned Julia, fearing from her sister's agitation another scene, which would bring rebuke on the poor child, and strike Mrs. Gunning as being so thoroughly countryfied.

"He is ill, poor fellow—very ill—dying, they say, of old age ; and when he is gone I shall have nothing, and nobody left in England to love but you ; and you, who are loved by so many, will not have time to care for me."

"Do not think so, dear Grace," said Julia,

tears coming into her eyes at these touching words. "I shall always love you very dearly."

"Julia, the dressing bell has rung. You are looking ill and tired, and I fear have been talking over melancholy things, which can do no good," observed Mrs. Gunning; "You had better go and dress."

"Yes, dear aunt, directly," replied Julia, passing her hand caressingly round her sister's neck. As she rose to leave the room she encountered the gaze of Mr. Rolleston, from which she involuntarily shrank. Had he overheard their conversation? He might have done so. And what was the meaning of that look, so different from the admiring glances to which she had been long accustomed? She could not read its meaning, but she did not like it—that was certain.

On entering the drawing-room after dinner Julia called Grace, who, with Eliza, still dined with Miss Heywood, to come and sit beside her, whispering, as the delighted girl obeyed,

“But you must be merry, Grace, or at least not make me seem sad, lest my aunt should prohibit our being together. She declares I look five years older since my arrival, and all owing to you.

‘ So let’s be gay the while we may,
For life is short and wears away.’ ”

“ I cannot be merry, dear Julia.”

“ Yes but you must, we will laugh and be merry together,” replied Julia lightly. “ This is winter time, when every one is gay. Cousin Harriet please to come and amuse me ; I want some one to make me laugh,” she continued, addressing the eldest Miss Bradley, who, besides envying the beauty and elegance of their young guest, was displeased with the superiority which she unconsciously assumed over her and her sister, who, though fine looking girls, were deficient in taste and style.

“ I never say funny things, Miss Trevyllian ; and mamma says it is not elegant or ladylike to laugh out loud,” replied Harriet Bradley.

“ Oh, dear, how very vulgar I am !” said Julia half hiding her face with her hands as if ashamed, performing the action with such inimitable grace, as to elicit smiles from her fashionable aunt, and bursts of laughter from Ernest Dudley and the young Bradleys, who had entered just in time to catch her words.

However mannish Henry Bradley might have considered it some years before, or however mannish he might consider it even now to slight or torment his sisters and his ugly country cousin, he shewed no inclination to slight the town-bred Julia, whose beauty had made a strong impression on his very susceptible heart. Being now nineteen, and having passed the last eight years at Eton, he not only regarded himself as a man, but expected every one else to do the same ; and as falling in love was considered by him a proof of manhood, he had no objection to being supposed a captive to his fair cousin ; and to prove his devotion he stationed himself beside her as

soon as possible, never quitting her throughout the evening. Fully aware that he was an eldest son, and a fine young man; but totally unconscious that his manners wanted the polish of high breeding, he thought his attentions being calculated to do honour to their object should be received with gratitude; and was consequently never deterred by shyness or humility from flirting with each fair damsel who pleased his fancy, deserting her when one more lovely met his view. His brother Stephen being a second son with a plainer exterior, instead of wooing in such an off-hand style, made his approaches in a more guarded and often more successful mode; the flattery of his tongue and eyes proving more powerful engines in his favour than Henry's better looks and prospects. In flirtations they had already been rivals more than once, and such seemed likely to be the case in the present instance, as each brother strove to out-do the other in his attentions to the lovely Julia;

whilst a third, but not alarming competitor for the lady's favour, appeared in the person of Ernest Dudley, who, though superior to both in sense and learning, from his shyness among strangers, did not express his admiration in a style likely to attract a youthful beauty. Accustomed to admiration from her childhood, Julia received their compliments with graceful badinage, encouraging rather than checking their adulation, being ever willing to provide amusement for the passing moment, without bestowing much thought on the future; yet, amidst all her coquetry—for coquetry it was, though so delicate that it could scarcely displease the most fastidious—she kept Grace by her side, every now and then addressing her in words of affection.

“I am come to plead for a song, my dear Miss Trevyllian,” said Mrs. Bradley in her blandest accents, wishing to check her son's flirtation till she could ascertain whether Mr.

Rolleston would approve or disapprove of a union between the cousins ; or till she had discovered whether the Gunnings would bestow their fortune on the *protegée* of whom they seemed so fond. The young men joined in the entreaty, and Julia without any affectation walked to the piano, followed by her beaux, who showed all proper assiduity in placing the stool, arranging the lights, selecting the song, and applauding the singer at its conclusion ; an applause fairly earned, for Julia's voice was both sweet and powerful, and did credit to the pains taken by her masters, some of the first in town.

“Beautiful ! exquisite ! quite divine !” exclaimed Mrs. Bradley, inwardly raging with jealousy at observing that Mr. Rolleston seemed much struck with his niece's singing. “What a delightful girl Miss Trevyllian is ! so lovely ! so accomplished ! such a contrast to poor Grace. I quite envy you Mrs. Gunning. She

is too beautiful to remain long unmarried though I suppose you would be fastidious in your choice."

"Why Julia, all things considered, is certainly entitled to look high. We have not yet heard Miss Bradley sing; surely she will give us that pleasure."

"Certainly, since you wish it. Harriet, my dear, Mrs. Gunning entreats you for a song, though your singing must appear as nothing after Miss Trevyllian, not having had the advantage of London masters. A simple country girl, with a simple country education; but our friends will not be critical," continued Mrs. Bradley anxious that Julia should not sing again, lest Mr. Rolleston's anger against her father should be subdued by her sweet notes.

The beauty returned to her sofa accompanied by Grace, and was again surrounded by her attendant cavaliers, who would have talked whilst Harriet sang had Julia not insisted upon silence.

“Splendid ! quite *à la Pasta !*” exclaimed Mr. Blundell, the son of a neighbouring squire, who, seeing Julia engaged, had flirted during and after dinner with Miss Bradley, turning the leaves of her music book, and keeping, or pretending to keep time, with foot and hand. Harriet received the praises of Mr. Blundell and the other guests with pretended humility ; but with the real conviction that her singing was equal to her cousin’s, though her voice was ill calculated for Italian music, and she had neither taste nor feeling. How could she doubt her own powers when they had been for so many years the theme of praise from Miss Heywood and her mother ?

A duet with her sister followed, which was also duly, or unduly admired, we should say praised, yet still Miss Bradley retained her seat at the piano.

“Does not your other pupil play or sing, Miss Heywood ?” asked Mr. Rolleston, pointing to Grace, and confusing the poor governess,

who was obliged to pause a moment to construct a proper answer for one of whom so many stood in awe.

“I am grieved, sir, to be compelled to admit that Miss Grace Trevyllian has not been endowed by prolific nature with that correct construction of the oral organs, or that delicate arrangement of the nerves, which gives the possessor a taste for heavenly harmony; and the power to—

“Raise a mortal to the skies,
Or bring an Angel down!”

She has passed the threshold of the divine science, but as yet she has—”

“Profited little by your instructions,” interrupted Mr. Rolleston with an involuntary curling of the lip, which made Miss Heywood turn away and avoid his neighbourhood for the remainder of the visit.

“Don’t you play or sing, Grace?” asked her sister.

“Oh, yes! she plays Tom Titler,” said Miss Eliza Bradley.

“And sings :—

“ Oh ! I’m a beauty bright,
My mother’s darling child.”

added Stephen Bradley, joining in his sister’s laugh. “Do enchant us once more most lovely cousin : the very thought of Grace’s singing has set my teeth on edge.”

“We want something to keep us alive this dull winter time. What say you to a game of Fright, Miss Trevyllian ? The prize this landscape annual,” interposed Mrs. Bradley before Julia could assent.

“Any thing you please,” said Julia, who, with her present audience cared little whether she sang or not. “Come Gracey, play your best ; I am determined you shall win,” she added in a whisper, hoping to direct her attention from Stephen Bradley’s comment, engaging the co-operation of the kind, though awkward Dudley, by an intelligent, and pleading glance.

So fright began amid shouts of laughter from the young who played, and the old who looked

on; and all seemed so glad and gleesome, that even the timid Grace was won to smiles.

“There, Gracey dear, I said you should win; and so you have,” cried Julia, presenting the book to her sister with a manner so graceful, a look so joyous and kind, that the poor child’s eyes were filled with tears of joy, as she received it; and Ernest Dudley, who had assisted in the victory by changing cards unknown to the victor, by which he became the loser, believed that the whole earth contained no other being so lovely as Julia Trevyllian, and felt himself the happiest creature breathing on meeting her approving look.

The game concluded, Julia, in compliance with a hint from her aunt, again tried her powers of fascination on Mr. Rolleston; but with so little success, though he was the shadow of a shade less churlish than before, that she soon gave up the endeavour and turned a not unwilling ear to the flatteries of her cousins, and an unreprieving eye on the admiration of

Ernest Dudley, who could only look his devotion, being far too shy to give it utterance.

“We have got over the day uncommonly well,” remarked Mr. Bradley to his wife just before yielding to the sleep that was coming over him. “I never saw Rolleston in such good humour—so gracious to all;—conversing with the Gunnings as though they were not related to Mrs. Trevyllian.

“Yes,” replied his wife; “It has passed off better than I expected, thanks to your not naming the Gunnings in the note; but gracious as is Mr. Rolleston, there is a something in him which I cannot understand. He looks as if he saw every thing, and cared for nothing; and then his tone that makes one colour without knowing why; I cannot comprehend him.”

“That is nothing extraordinary—no one does. I should have said, but it cannot be, that he was more annoyed at meeting the Dudleys than the Gunnings. He looked quite fierce at Mr. Dudley, though they are stran-

gers, which is the more singular as he is a pleasant, sensible man."

"A prosy old book worm, who may know what passed a thousand years ago, but certainly knows nothing of what is passing now ; and his son is his papa's own child ; shy and sheepish, devouring Julia with his eyes, but not daring to address her, or in so low a tone that no one else can catch a word. This comes of home education ! You see now, my dear, the difference of having sent our boys to Eton."

"I shall have to pay the difference without dispute ; but I doubt if that shy, silent boy has not double the learning of Harry and Stephen clubbed together."

"Learning !" repeated Mrs. Bradley contemptuously. "Look at their manners. Which will make their way in the world, and win fortunes by their tongues ?"

"Time will show. Had you said by their persevering application, I should at once have

decided in favour of young Dudley. Harry has impudence, and Stephen has cunning ; but for manner—I think less slang would be more elegant. Instead of attending to the farm they occupy their whole time in sporting and flirting ; I hope they may not find themselves poor men.”

“That is just like you, Mr. Bradley ; always croaking, and finding fault. Yet who runs greater risks of losing fortunes through imprudence than yourself, playing the part of nurse tender to other people’s children to your own detriment. That troublesome child putting herself so forward to-day, just when we wished to keep her in the back ground. And the idea of your defending her, thus setting yourself in more open opposition against your cousin ; but it was just your custom. There is one thing I must entreat, that you do not press the Gunnings to remain after to-morrow. Mr. Rolleston seemed struck with Julia’s beauty and singing, and should he see much more of her

may make her his heiress ;—no fear of his taking a fancy to Grace, and so far her hoydenism of to-day may have been fortunate. Could not you propose some excursion for the young people that would keep them out of your cousin's way ?”

The only reply she received was a snore.

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY the next morning a gentle tap was heard at Julia's door, and then Grace entered with a timid step.

"Will you take this, and sometimes think of me, whilst using it?" said the blushing girl, presenting a note-case nicely worked.

"Thank you, dear Grace. How very pretty, and how very kind!" said Julia, kissing the donor, and colouring at the consciousness that she did not love as she was loved. "How nicely worked! Who made it?"

“Who made it? Was it not for you, Julia, and do you think I would have let another put even a stitch in it? I should have been jealous.”

“Ah, Gracey dear! you certainly are the best little creature living,” cried Julia, with a second kiss, and a deeper feeling of shame. “But they said last night that you could not work.”

“They say many things that are not true; I am not as stupid as they assert; I wish I were!—I should be happier then, not comprehending their unkind remarks.”

“Let me shew this, and prove that you can work, at least.”

“No, no; you must not shew it. Ann bought me the silks when she went home, and I have got up at sunrise morning after morning that I might finish it in time, unknown to any.”

“Dear, dear child! To think of your giving yourself so much trouble for me,” cried Julia, conscience stricken.

“A trouble, Julia ! it was a pleasure to work for you. I only feared that I should not do it well, or that you might not like it.”

“But I do like it very much, and shall often think of her who worked it. I wish you were going with us ; but I cannot coax my aunt to consent.”

“And you asked her?—you really asked?—you wished to have me with you—ugly, and awkward, and stupid as I am?” exclaimed the grateful child in joyous tones, forgetting, in the rapture of her gratitude, the non-fulfilment of her wishes.

“Yes, indeed I did ; I tell you what, dear Gracey, I am not as you are—I have not your strong and unselfish affection that can withstand distance and time ; I have not your simple single-heartedness ; I am vain and ambitious : but I am not so worldly yet, whatever I may be hereafter, but what I can see and prize your worth ;—ay, and wish that I were like you too.”

“Wish to be like me !” repeated Grace in wonder.

“Yes, wish I had your simple, grateful, loving heart, dear Grace,” said Julia, with a half smile at the idea of their changing persons. “And yet,” she added with a touch of deeper feeling, “I doubt the wisdom of the wish : to love as you love is to run a fearful risk—to set our happiness upon one cast, and, if we lose, die of a broken heart ! No, better laugh and jest with all, but care for none ; for love is a game at which few play honestly, or stand equal chances. One stakes his all ; is ruined if he lose : and if he win, wins but a worthless bauble ! No ;—

‘ I’ll be merry and free ;
I’ll be sad for naebody ;’ ”

sang Julia gaily. “At least naebody but you, *ma Mignome* ; so I will love you very much ; and you must love me as you do now, let what will come to pass ; this shall be the token of our plighted faith,” placing a ring upon her

finger, with a Forget-me-not in turquoise. "A pledge that each will serve the other to the utmost of her power. There, my dear, I am growing as loving and unworldly as yourself; but you must not weep," kissing away her tears. "Crying makes one a figure, and tells others what one might as well keep to one's self; namely, that one has feeling; besides my aunt is calling." So saying, passing her hand across her own eyes, and giving another kiss to the wondering Grace, she hurried away to attend Mrs. Gunning to the breakfast room.

"My own dear Julia!" murmured Grace as she looked at the ring, forgetting at the moment every care and vexation in the delight of feeling herself beloved. "Yes, if I can ever serve you, it shall be done; even to the breaking of my own heart."

In pursuance of her plan Mrs. Bradley proposed that the young people should walk to Westford Coppice, which, with its pretty stream and ruined tower, was one of the lions

of the neighbourhood ; whilst she took Mrs. Gunning and others to a second lion at a greater distance ; a scheme to which all readily assented.

“ Will you not come and see poor Frolic first ?” asked Grace of Julia in a whisper.

“ I can do him no good, and have little fancy for seeing sick dogs, lest they should go mad,” replied her sister, who was at the moment much better amused in listening to Henry Bradley’s compliments.

Grace turned away with a disappointed look ; and neither the look nor the preceding whisper were unremarked by Mr. Rolleston and Ernest Dudley.

The young party were soon equipped for their walk, and started in high spirits, their number increased by the attendance of Harriet’s beau of the night before, and a young friend, who accidentally met and joined them.

The strangers, from politeness or inclination, attached themselves to the Misses Bradley,

who made no objection to this arrangement, whilst Henry, Stephen, and Ernest Dudley devoted themselves to Grace and Julia; or rather to Julia alone, for neither of the three would have noticed Grace's presence, had she not by retaining her sister's arm prevented more than one from walking next the beauty, a distinction coveted by all.

On passed the youthful party, their light laughs ringing in the morning air; their gay jests speaking hearts that knew no grief.

Julia seemed fully resolved on practising her morning's moral:—

“ I'll be merry and free ;
I'll be sad for naebody.”

She had a smile or a retort for each of her attendants; now sporting with one, now sporting with another; her beauty rendered more brilliant by the exercise and the flatteries poured upon her. Though only the beginning of February, it was a clear, bright, sunshiny day; a slight frost, but no wind; not too cold

for a walk ; and Julia, despite her town education, tripped lightly along the rugged path, or sprang over the obstacles which obstructed the way, with as much glee, and far more grace than her country cousins ; her spirits rising higher and higher as she proceeded ; till she forgot to retake her sister's arm, bestowing her attention at the moment on Ernest Dudley, who, inspired by her animation, for once discoursed with ease and fluency.

“Where is the fairy bark that is to bear me across ‘this raging water?’” asked Julia gaily, as they reached the brink of a pretty stream. “The bridge is broken down ; and I have no wings to bear me over. In the words of the song—‘I wish I were a little bird.’”

“And I your tuneful mate,” said Dudley with a low, earnest voice, and crimson cheek, abashed at his own boldness.

“I would give up shooting then lest I should unwittingly injure you,” observed Henry Bradley.

“And I would place lure upon lure ; spread net upon net, till I had made you my captive,” remarked his brother Stephen.

“Nay, then I recall my wish,” said Julia blushing, but not with displeasure. “So you must tax your wit and gallantry and get me across poor simple girl as I am ; for positively I must mount that pretty slope on the other side.”

“We will soon manage that,” exclaimed the brothers.

Large stones were brought from a neighbouring heap, and thrown into the stream, a burst of merriment following every splash, as the thrower rarely escaped a sprinkling ; and thus with the addition of a plank from the broken bridge, a crossing was erected, whose insecurity only made it the more agreeable to the light hearted group.

Julia passed safely over with the assistance of her three devoted esquires, her only danger consisting in all pressing forward to aid her,

and then bounded lightly away up the pretty slope, which she had before admired, followed by the rivals contending for her attention. The Misses Bradley crossed as safely with the assistance of their respective beaux, but no one aided—no one thought of Grace; and there she stood on the other side of the stream unable to pass alone, the plank having been partly displaced by Eliza, yet too timid to ask help of a stranger; and aware that her cousins would laugh at her distress.

“See! Grace cannot get over,” exclaimed Harriet, as having arrived midway up the ascent she turned to look back. “That is good fun!”

“You are on the right side to run away, my little beauty,” shouted Henry.

“Let us see how you can swim,” shouted Stephen.

“Shall I help her?” asked young Blundell.

“Oh, no! she can cross if she likes,” said

Harriet quickly, unwilling to be deserted by her beau.

Ernest Dudley who, to his great delight, had succeeded in fixing Julia's attention by his spirited relation of an ancient legend, desired nothing less than an interruption; but as he involuntarily turned at the last loud shout his kindness of heart triumphed over every feeling of vanity, or the wish to make a serious impression on the lovely Julia. There was something so sad and touching in the child's attitude as she stood looking towards the gay and mocking group—something so heartless and revolting in the shouts of mockery of her cousins, that, breaking off abruptly, he ran back to the stream, and finding that the plank had been carried away by the current took Grace in his arms, with the kindness of a brother, before she guessed his purpose, and bore her across, springing from stone to stone.

"Thank you!" said Grace in a low, faltering voice, as he set her down on the other side.

"I do not deserve your thanks," he replied, touched by her manner; "I should have helped you over before, and not have left you standing there."

"Why should you, a stranger, do this, when my cousins only mocked?"

"Because I have been taught to feel for others; and they have not, I should imagine. But you are tired; take my arm and let me aid you up this hill.

Grace's look of gratitude was not to be mistaken, or forgotten; yet the next instant she drew back, saying, as she did so, "But you would rather be with Julia, and I would not detain you."

"Oh, no!" stammered Dudley, with a crimson blush, drawing her arm within his, and ascending the hill.

"Well done, Don Quixote!" shouted Henry, wishing to make his rival ridiculous.

“Let us walk on, or we shall be late ; they will soon overtake us,” said Stephen in an insinuating tone.

“You may do as you please, but I shall wait for Grace, whom we have treated very ill,” said Julia resolutely.

Of course the gentleman remained beside her ; and Henry deferred his raillery till some more fitting time.

“Dear Grace, can you forgive me, that, intoxicated by the flatteries of these gallant knights,” and her eye passed with a playful mocking smile from one to the other, “I forgot you for a season ?”

“It is very kind of you to think of me at all,” replied Grace with humility.

“It would be a shame if I did not think of such a good little creature. You deserve a victors wreath Mr. Dudley ; or, in plain prose, the praise of every warm and honest heart. Now go on with your interesting legend.”

Ernest coloured, stammered out some

unintelligible words touching his delight at having won her approbation, and then proceeded with his legend according to her wish ; but not in his former spirited style, owing to the constant and impertinent interruptions of the young Bradleys, who were resolved on tormenting their rival to the utmost of their power. The coppice and ruin were properly admired,—and the party returned as gay as when they had started.

“ Just come round this walk, Julia,” said her sister, as they were passing through the garden on their way to the house.

“ Yes, it is out as I hoped ; I have been watching it every day for a long time,” cried Grace, presenting her sister with a purple violet growing in a sunny spot.

“ Thank you, Gracey. This is quite a delight at this season ; and I am sure it would not have blown but for your nursing. My annt will envy me my treasure.”

If the young people returned in good spirits

and good temper, it was more than could be said of their elders, whose minds were sadly out of tune ; and as it seemed this universal discord was caused by the jarring of one string. If Mr. Rolleston had played the polite and agreeable the evening before, he seemed inclined to indemnify himself for his unwonted graciousness by enacting the rude and the disagreeable in the morning. The Gunnings decided that nothing should induce them to remain another day : Mr. Dudley felt that he was hated if not insulted ; and Mrs. Bradley fancied that he took especial pleasure in annoying her ; yet had all those aggrieved been called on to substantiate their injuries no jury would have given a verdict in their favor. Mr. Rolleston's words if repeated would have sounded too trifling for censure ; yet each and all considered themselves affronted. It was not so much his words as his manner ;—not what he said, but what he implied ;—not what he spoke but what he looked.

Mr. Bradley was the only one who felt un-

awed by this awful man ; whether because he cared not who read the whole of his character, and plans ; or whether because Mr. Rolleston treated him with more consideration it matters not.

Nor did Mr. Rolleston's temper seem much mended in the evening when all were assembled in the drawing-room ; but as he sat silent and apart, apparently occupied with a book there was less chance of an unpleasant collision.

The rest of the party were grouped pretty much as they had been the evening before, except that the two young men, who had escorted the walkers, having been invited to dinner Miss Eliza Bradley enjoyed the pleasure of a flirtation as well as her sister, she being a whole head taller, two years older, and far more of a woman than Grace Trevyllian, who, poor child thought only of papa and mamma, Julia, Frolic, and the kind-hearted Rawdon.

Mr. Bradley had just concluded a description of his favorite plough to Mr. Gunning,

who endeavoured to look as if he had understood him ; Mrs. Gunning had just delighted her hostess with a tale of fashionable scandal ; and the flirterers had just paused for a moment to think either of their past nothings, or their future, when Mr. Dudley who had been discoursing most historically and philosophically touching the civilisation, arts, sciences, and general learning of the ancients with a neighbouring antiquary, thinking this a propitious moment for showing off the acquirements of his son, whose only tutor he had been, called upon him from the other end of the room to take a part in the conversation.

“Can you remember, Ernest, who founded the Alexandrian library, and in what year?”

“Ernest, who had been silent for the last ten minutes, completely absorbed in admiration of Julia’s beauty, which he had been contemplating with open eyes and lips apart, startled at the question, stammered out “beautiful,” and then stared enquiringly at his

father, not having understood one word of his question.

A general titter succeeded, but was checked by politeness; whilst Mr. Dudley repeated his query, with more even than his usual elaborate formality.

“Can you remember when the Alexandrian library was founded, and by whom?”

“Yes, sir;” answered Ernest recovering his confusion, and collecting his thoughts on the instant.

Mr. Dudley though prosy was a learned man, and what is more had a real love for learning, apart from a ridiculous desire to shew off his son’s attainments; and his son’s tastes and feelings were the same, with the exception, that he never dreamt of display; and thus when appealed to, supposing that his father’s memory had really failed on the point enquired, he hastened with the most perfect simplicity and single-mindedness to supply him with the required information; and know-

ing his wish to dive beneath the surface, entered more into detail than he would have done to any one else, never guessing that others might find any thing ridiculous in his so doing.

“The Alexandrian library was founded by Ptolemy 1st, surnamed Lagos, King of Egypt, who died at an advanced age, about 234 years before Christ. Educated in the Court of Philip of Macedon, he accompanied Alexander the Great in his invasion of Asia, killed one of the Indian monarchs in single combat, and reduced the rock Aornus. Egypt having been assigned him on the demise of the world’s conqueror, and Perdicas failing in his attempt to drive him thence, he assumed the title of king, about nineteen years after the death of Alexander. He received the name of Soter on account of the assistance rendered to the Rhodians, built a Pharos in the dangerous bay of Alexandria; and established a society called Museum, the members of which being

kept at the people's expence, employed their time in the advancement of philosophy, science, and the liberal arts. He wrote the History of Alexander the Great, which was much admired at the time for its elegance, and authority, and laid the foundation of the famous library, which was increased to the number of two hundred thousand volumes of the choicest works by his son Ptolemy Philadelphus, who—”

Here what had before been only a half suppressed titter, became a loud and almost universal laugh, whilst the abashed youth feeling himself the object of all this mirth, though without exactly comprehending why, broke off abruptly, flushing scarlet to the roots of his hair, and the tips of his fingers.

“Very edifying indeed young man! you repeat your lesson admirably. Pray give us another page from Lempriere—let us have the whole true and particular account of all the thirteen Ptolemies up to the beautiful Cleopatra,”

remarked Mr. Rolleston with that cold, sarcastic tone, which even the most practiced man of the world could never hear unmoved.

“In pity spare us ! We have had two :—

“A third alas ! were more than we could bear,”

exclaimed Stephen Bradley.

“Hear ! hear ! hear ! Hear ! hear ! hear !” shouted his brother Henry in such a ludicrous voice, that the bursts of laughter were renewed ; the provoked father, and the simple minded Grace, who admired the youth’s learning, being the only parties who did not swell the general mirth.

“I can see nothing to laugh at ladies and gentlemen in a son complying with the wish of a parent, and supplying that information, which had escaped the failing memory of age,” began Mr. Dudley ; but fresh bursts of laughter at his formal address drowned the conclusion of his prosy speech.

We must all have seen that the merriment of

a large party once excited cannot be hushed on the instant, but breaks forth again, and again, re-awakened, renewed by the veriest trifles, particularly when one or more of the laughers have a malicious pleasure in annoying the object of their mirth; and thus it was on this occasion.

When the merriment was dying away, a look or word from the young Bradleys, or Mr. Rolleston, whose cynical laugh was peculiarly galling, gave it fresh life and vigour; and this lasted for several minutes, during which time the learned father looked proud and flushed, whilst the shy son, overwhelmed with confusion, sat with cheeks as red as cheeks could be, ready to creep into a nutshell if any friend would have provided one for the attempt; unpitied by all but poor Grace whose countenance showed the deepest sympathy. She could feel for the shy and the awkward when laughed at; and the Dudley's saw that she could.

"I really beg your pardon, Mr. Dudley,"

said the kind hearted Bradley, striving in vain to speak with perfect gravity. "Your son is a very clever young man with a wonderful memory; and we are all much obliged for the information he gave us; but it was so strange, so unusual, his going on without stopping;—in short so like a school lesson, that when I thought he intended giving us all the Ptolemies, I could not help laughing a little; though it was certainly very rude."

"Pray make no apology; you were much less to blame than others," replied Mr. Dudley with great stiffness, glancing at Mr. Rolleston and the young Bradleys. "We had better say no more about it. Perhaps Miss Trevyllian, if not too much exhausted by her late mirth, will with her voice attune our souls to harmony."

"With pleasure," said Julia half ashamed of having laughed at her kind admirer, and not wishing to afford her cousin a further triumph.

She not only sang but sang her best; all her hearers were delighted, and the Dudleys

forgave her mirth, though the son retained his seat instead of following her to the piano as he had done the preceding night. But Ernest's woes and embarrassments were not yet ended.

“ Oh ! my violet, I have lost my sweet violet, that blew at this cold season on purpose to please me. Do look for it, cousins !” cried Julia, shaking her dress to be sure that it was not there.

Henry and Stephen looked to the right and left and all around in vain ; but Ernest saw it at his feet where it had probably fallen as its owner rose to go to the piano. Shyness and vexation prompted him to leave it where it was ; but his natural kindness conquered, and he presented Julia with the lost flower.

Her thanks were conveyed in her sweetest tones ; but Ernest could not quite forget her laughter, and received those thanks with coldness.

As he stooped for the violet a paper fell

from his bosom, which was seized and read, unknown to him, by Stephen, without any scruple of conscience.

“ Silence, ladies and gentlemen !” he exclaimed after its perusal. “ Here is a poetical effusion worthy of Horace or Virgil in the olden times—Byron or Scott in the modern ; to say nothing of Milton and others.”

“ Read ! Read ! cried several, Mr. Rolleston among the rest, and Ernest, not recognising his paper, made no objection.

“ I will do my best ladies and gentlemen in compliance with your wishes ; but should the lines appear ridiculous, I must pray you to lay the blame on the deficiencies of the poor reader,” said Stephen beginning in a most ludicrously sentimental tone.

THE VIOLET.

“ Strange that this fragile flow’r should dare
Stern winter’s chill, and blighting air ?

“ Ah no ! not strange !—it caught the beam
From beauty’s eye—deemed it the gleam
Of April sun, and forth it burst
Of Spring’s fair flow’r’s, the sweetest— first.

“ Encore ! Encore !” shouted Henry Bradley, guessing the truth from the author’s embarrassment.

“ Yes, pray read it again ; those lines are the production of real genius,” remarked Mr. Rolleston.—

“ ‘ Stern winter’s chill and blighting air !’—so very original !

“ ‘ Ah, no—not strange !’—How sublime, and poetical !

“ ‘ It caught the beam of beauty’s eye !’—some youthful, very youthful poet, just touched by Cupid’s dart.

“ ‘ Deemed it the gleam of April’s sun’—so

striking and natural ! awakening such beautiful visions of smiles and tears.

“ ‘ And forth it burst ! ’—popped out of the ground at once as the lady bent over the damp earth just like a Jack in the box. Who is the author, Mr. Stephen Bradley ? I must become acquainted with him.”

“ What a capital criticism ! ” said Henry triumphing in his rival’s tortures, who stood with changing cheek and downcast eyes unconsciously twiddling his fingers.” You beat the Quarterly all to nothing. Should I turn poet, I shall take great care never to let you see my poems, lest you should cut me up in the same style.”

“ Be under no alarm on that point I never— ‘ break a butterfly upon a wheel, ’ ” replied Mr. Rolleston, who, whatever might be his fancy for annoying the Dudleys, had no intention of joining in a cabal with his young cousins, whose slang and familiar manners displeased him.

Henry tried to laugh at the rejoinder of the old fellow, as he termed him behind his back, but his laugh was discordant.

“ I beg your pardon, Miss Trevyllian ; I see the lines are addressed to you,” cried Stephen Bradley, pretending now for the first time to observe the superscription. “ And the initials are E. D. Whose can they be ?” he continued, handing the paper to Julia.

“ Ernest Dudley, to be sure ;” cried Harriet with a laugh at her own sagacity, which proved that she had not that very great objection to laughing, which she had asserted the evening before.

All eyes were directed towards the unhappy author, who had been enduring martyrdom for the last ten minutes ;—yes absolute martyrdom, let plain prose people object as they may to the word. Think of the horror of a poet ; a shy, awkward youth between man and boy, brought up in seclusion, having his first lines to his first love, or fancied love, read aloud to

a mocking audience, in the most ludicrous lack-a-daisical style; criticised by the most cynical and unmerciful of critics; all present looking at him, and, with the exception of his own father, and a despised child all laughing at him; and this in the presence of the beauty for whom he had strung his maiden lyre. 'Talk of the tortures inflicted by the Indians on Hunter and others! they were nothing to Ernest Dudley's sufferings. What were larding and roasting to such mockery and criticism?

"I am sorry for having detained the lines so long from their rightful owner," continued Stephen to Julia, "and delayed your thanks to the accomplished author, who is waiting for your praises, looking down as if he too, like the violet, required the beam from beauty's eye to call him into life."

The poor poet's awkward attitude—the twiddling of his fingers—his crimson cheeks—the idea of his resemblance to a violet, were too much for Julia's politeness, and the sensi-

tive Ernest could plainly distinguish her musical laugh among those of his tormentors. Flattered vanity, if no better feeling, might have induced Julia to check her mirth, and defend her poet, had that poet been a person of consideration ; but she had been too long accustomed to the homage of those counted among the great ones of the earth, not to feel less elated by the devotion of a raw, country youth, than amused at his awkward attempts to express it. Nor was she one iota more delighted with the homage of her cousins, whom she regarded as two Eton boys by no means good specimens of their class, being neither gentlemanly nor amiable ; but the rivalry of the three entertained her ; and it suited her pleasure, having nothing better to do, to encourage it ; and thus, still thinking only of her own amusement, she joined in the laugh against the youthful poet, till checked by an appealing look and whisper from the pitying Grace.

“ I pray you to be grave, good people, and not laugh at lines addressed to me, which are really very pretty,” said Julia, trying to resume her gravity. “ I feel much flattered by Mr. Dudley’s verses, and we ought all to apologise for our unseemly merriment, which was occasioned by Stephen’s ludicrous style of reading; and once seized with a laughing fit there is no stopping oneself; unluckily, a word, a look will set one off again.”

“ As the lines were not presented by me, but obtained I know not how by another, it is neither requisite, Miss Trevyllian, that you should apologise for your merriment, nor I for my presumption in having ventured to address you,” replied Ernest proudly, far more indignant at her careless manner now, and her former disregard of his feelings, than at the conduct of any of the rest of the party.

“ Then the blame all rests with me for having given to the public what was meant for one dear eye alone,” observed Stephen Bradley.

“Accept of my most humble apologies, Mr. Ernest Dudley ; and believe that had I been informed who was the author of those beautiful lines, I should have—”

“Done exactly as you did,” said Ernest closing the sentence, his indignation conquering his timidity.

“Permit me to congratulate Mr. Ernest Dudley on exhibiting equal talents as a poet and historian,” remarked Mr. Rolleston, with that peculiar curling of the lip which was so annoying.

“You would say, sir, that I have shown folly in both, nor will I dispute the truth of your statement ; but better folly than that perversity of heart which can find pleasure in inflicting pain on others,” replied Ernest boldly, meeting Mr. Rolleston’s eye from which so many shrank, ere turning away to a distant table he took up a newspaper.

A short silence followed this just rebuke ; then the young ladies and gentlemen resumed

their flirting, whilst the kind hearted Bradley crossed the room for the purpose of conversing with Ernest, vexed with himself for not having interfered in his behalf.

Mr. Dudley had fortunately been too deeply engaged in the renewed discussion with his antiquarian neighbour, touching the learning of the ancients, to comprehend that his son had again become the subject of ridicule, and consequently did not increase that ridicule by any injudicious remarks; and Mr. Rolleston either struck with Ernest's rebuke, or thinking that he had been more than sufficiently mortified, took no further notice of his presence; but challenged Mr. Gunning to a game of chess, aware that he piqued himself on being a first rate player.

The challenge was accepted—Mr. Gunning won the first advance; but before the completion of a dozen moves, to his great surprise and greater vexation, he was check mated.

“ I shall certainly leave Elmwood Lodge to-

morrow," said Mr. Gunning to himself, as he turned away from his triumphant conqueror.

And Mr. Gunning did leave Elmwood Lodge on the morrow, notwithstanding Julia's entreaties, declaring that he did not feel quite at ease till he had passed a mile beyond the park ; and yet Mr. Rolleston had made a very graceful bow at parting, expressing a hope that he would have a pleasant journey, and adding—"If at any time you pass near Rolleston Court I shall expect to see you."

"He may expect me long enough," thought Mr. Gunning. "I cannot tell what there is in that man ; but I would as soon be in company with an executioner, and his civility, I do not know whether it is not worse than his rudeness ; there is such a peculiar curl about his lip when he plays polite ; yet I thought him pleasant the first day."

"I am glad they are gone," thought Mrs. Bradley. "I am sure both husband and wife are cunning worldly people, who have always

both eyes open to their own interests, though he talks so much of generosity and charity ; and she would have one believe her the most delicate invalid in the world, who cannot put two and two together. It is quite as well too that Julia should depart ; she has half turned my boys' heads with her beauty and her style ! —her impertinent assumption of superiority I should call it ; for it was evident to me that she was amusing herself with their attentions, not exactly flirting, as Harriet and Eliza flirt, but laughing with them, or at them, just as it pleased her. She looks for a great match as well as her aunt. There was one thing, however, that I was happy to see, Mr. Rolleston scarcely shook hands with her at parting, though I thought at first he was going to make her one of his civil speeches ; he might have been struck by her tears. I should not have suspected her of really caring so much for that stupid, frightful Grace, though she would keep her by her side. Nor has Mr.

Rolleston once spoken to Grace, so that my husband, to whom he seems more civil than any one else, may be his heir, though my children, notwithstanding my wishes, do not dare to address him."

"She is gone!—and there is no one to love and protect me now! She is gone!" murmured poor Grace, turning away from the window whence she had watched the last wave of Julia's hand. "She is gone!" and her tears burst forth with a passionate gush at the mournful words, and the conviction that she was now indeed alone!

About two hours later as Messrs. Dudley, Rolleston, and Bradley, were returning from an inspection of the farm, their attention was attracted by voices in dispute; and as they turned an angle in the shrubbery walk the subject of dispute became apparent. It was a pretty sunny spot, one of Grace's favourite haunts; and thither had she taken her old pet Frolic, thinking that though too ill to

walk, he might still enjoy for a few minutes the fresh healthy air, and a bask in the sun ; which was warm for the season.

She had brought him carefully covered up in a basket ; but at the moment when the gentlemen appeared in sight, she was holding him in her arms, as if fearful of his being torn from her protection, standing before her cousins Henry and Stephen with an erect figure, and determined air, forming a striking contrast to her usual fearful, crouching attitude ; whilst her large, dark, hazel eyes, whose colour was almost unknown, they were so seldom raised, were flashing on them with mingled command and intreaty. She was no longer timid and frightened ; affection had made her bold and fearless.

“ It is of no use arguing the point, Grace ; my mother says she will not have the troublesome sick creature about the house any longer, and has ordered us to kill it—so it must be done.”

“It shall not be done, Henry!” cried Grace with passionate energy.

“This is nonsense, Grace. If you had not been so silly as to bring the animal out here, it would have been done quietly, and you would have known nothing about it. I am really sorry, since you seem so fond of the dog; I thought before it had been only pretence, or just out of opposition; but there is no help for it, such being my mother’s orders,” replied Henry with more kindness, not quite untouched by his cousin’s grief.

“It will be a mercy to put the creature out of its misery; much better kill it at once than let it linger on in pain, a useless expence,” remarked the more wily Stephen.

“Frolic is in no pain, and shall not die,” she answered! “For the expence—I have money—gold;—and will give you all I have; but do not kill the only living thing that loves me in this house.”

“My mother will neither take the money,

which you coaxed from my father, nor give up her purpose ; so there is no use saying more about it," replied Stephen.

"But Mr. Bradley—does Mr. Bradley know it? He promised that no one should hurt Frolic or take him from me," cried the trembling girl, her fears increasing for her favourite.

"Do you suppose my mother would order this without his consent? You think you can wheedle my father out of any thing," replied Stephen with a sneer, seeing that Henry was inclined to yield. "Give up the animal without any more fuss, or we must take him by force ; he shall be shot or drowned just as you please ; and we will put him out of his misery as soon as we can."

"Then you may shoot and drown me too, for I will not be parted from him," exclaimed the affrighted girl, with a still more passionate and determined tone, holding her favourite firmly, whilst her dark eyes flashed defiance on her persecutors.

"Then we must take him by force as I hinted," said Stephen advancing a step.

"Not whilst I have strength to prevent it!" exclaimed Ernest Dudley, stepping forward in answer to Grace's scream, from behind a shrub, having been an unobserved spectator of the foregoing scene. "Shame on you both thus to torture one whose helplessness claims protection—whose devoted affection demands respect and admiration."

"How dare you to interfere?" questioned Henry Bradley fiercely, regarding his late rival with no friendly feeling, Julia's morning farewell having been, in his opinion, more than sufficiently flattering to atone for her evening's merriment. "I might have yielded before; but now it shall be done."

"Attempt it at your peril, though two to one," exclaimed Ernest with equal warmth, the insults of the preceding day quickening his indignation.

Placing himself so as to protect Grace, and

her favourite, he prepared for the combat—his first combat, for he had received no Eton education; and Henry and Stephen were springing forward to the attack, when suddenly arrested by Mr. Bradley's authoritative tone, "Stop boys! I command you!"

The young men turned at his words, and their flushed cheeks flushed deeper still as they met his eyes.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for opposing your sons, who I could not believe were acting in accordance with your wishes," began young Dudley.

"Make no apology; you only did what I should have done had I been in your place; and I am obliged to you for having so acted. As for you," looking at his sons, who shrunk from his glance, "I am ashamed of you both. You know my wishes with regard to Frolic, and if your mother really gave such an order as you pretend, you should have applied to me upon the subject, instead of behaving so

cruelly towards Grace, and fighting your guest for defending her; two to one too! I am ashamed to think that sons of mine could so demean themselves! Away from my presence! Grace trembles at the sight of you, as well she may; and remember that before you sit down again at the same table with me, you make ample apologies to her and Ernest Dudley. Not a word—away with you! I heard all that passed, and nothing can be said in your defence.”

His sons, convinced from his manner that he was in one of those resolute moods when he would be obeyed, turned towards the house their hearts full of shame and anger.

“Poor child! you were right in supposing that I should not sanction such cruelty; and I love and admire the boldness you showed in defence of your favourite. I did not think you had so much spirit. How is the old fellow?” said Mr. Bradley approaching Grace, who still

held the dog in her arms, though not with her former nervous pressure.

“He is asleep now ;” she replied laying him gently in the basket, which Ernest held ready to receive him.

“Asleep !” observed Mr. Bradley in a tone that startled his little cousin.

“Frolic ! dear Frolic !” she exclaimed bending over him.

The poor, old dog obedient to the last, opened his eyes—half raised himself to lick her hand ;—and then sank down with a faint moan. —For some moments no one spoke.

“I will take him into the house again it is getting cold now,” said Grace, alarmed she knew not why at the silence. “Will you tell me what to give him ?” she continued looking up in Mr. Bradley’s face.

“It is of no use, dear Grace,” he replied turning away.

“He is not dead—I am sure he is not dead”

—she exclaimed, as if hoping by the vehemence of her assertion to satisfy herself; bending over the dog, and calling on him to look up.

“It is all over, my good little girl,” remarked the elder Dudley with a manner so kind, as in some degree to lessen the shock.

Grace put her hand to the heart—it had ceased to beat;—raised the paw, which fell nerveless from her touch;—and then convinced of the painful truth, burst into a passion of tears.

“Dead! dead! and I wish I were dead too, for there is no living thing left now to love or care for me:—Julia, and Frolic are both gone!”

“Hush, hush, Gracey! it is wicked and ungrateful to say this; yes, and false too, for I love and care for you,” said Mr. Bradley, pressing her hand kindly within his.

“I hope it is not wicked; and I would not be ungrateful to you, who are always kind;

but there is no one else who cares for me," sobbed Grace.

"I will send you another dog," said Ernest, quickly.

"You shall have the choice of three," added his father.

"You shall have half a dozen, and no one shall touch them; or any thing else you like, if you will but cease sobbing," said Mr. Bradley for all were touched with her grief, and the way in which she had spoken of her desolation.

"You are all kind—very kind; but I will never love another dog, for dear old Frolic's sake," faltered poor Grace, striving to check her sobs.

"But you will want something to play with," said Mr. Bradley.

"I shall never play any more," she replied shaking her head sadly, "Julia is gone! and Frolic is gone; and I have no one to play with;

and I do not want to play with any one else. I shall never love any dog again, as I loved dear old Frolic, for he was mamma's pet; and when I looked at him I thought of her and papa and Julia;—or if I did some one would kill it when I was not by."

"Then what shall I do for you? I cannot bear to hear you sob so," said Mr. Bradley.

His little cousin was silent for some moments, listening as it seemed to the kind persuasions of young Dudley, who pointed out with gentle earnestness the impropriety of such vehement grief, reminding her that he had given her no hope of her favourite's life the day before; then looking up in Mr. Bradley's face she spoke abruptly:

"There is one thing you can do; and I will try not to cry any more. They always said when poor Frolic died that his skin should be sold, and the wild cats eat his flesh. Will you help me to bury him, and let no one touch him?"

“To be sure, Gracey! to be sure! only do not shudder, and look so wildly. Who could have frightened you with such horrid tales? Tell me that I may punish them.”

“I want no one punished:—only do not let them do it. I do think I should go mad if they did, as I have sometimes thought I should.”

“Come, come, Gracey dear! you must not talk in this way; you do not know what you are saying,” replied Mr. Bradley, beginning to feel that his guardianship had not been as zealous and vigilant as it should have been, considering the specimens he had sometimes seen of the temper of his lady and children towards the helpless girl. “You shall choose the spot for his grave yourself, the under gardener shall dig it deep—a stone shall be placed above it; and I will engage that none shall disturb it. I will speak to Thomas about it directly.”

“ Oh no, not yet ! perhaps he is not really dead.”

“ Well some hours hence ; just when you please.”

“ You were wishing yesterday for a likeness of Frolic ; I will try what I can do for you,” said Ernest kindly.

“ Ay, do !” said his father, “ and I will write the letters of which I spoke, that you may have more time.”

“ Thank you !” exclaimed the grateful Grace, glancing from one to the other ; “ I did not know I had such kind friends.”

“ You deserve them for your courage and affection,” observed Ernest warmly. “ In return, you must promise not to cry, and mope ; but try to be cheerful.”

“ I will try, indeed I will ; perhaps it was wicked to love poor Frolic as I did, but I had no one else to love, papa and mamma, and Julia all away ; and he seemed a part of them,” said the lonely girl, endeavouring to check the

tears that again rushed unbidden into her eyes, as she bent above her favourite.

The spot was chosen for the grave—poor old Frolic was taken into Mr. Bradley's study that Ernest might the more conveniently fulfil his promise ; and Grace forgot half her sorrow in her gratitude, whilst watching the progress of the sketch, which proved an admirable likeness. A coloured chalk was required to give a tinge of tan about the mouth, and Grace went to the library to fetch it. So intent was she on her errand that she had procured the chalk, and was leaving the room, before she discovered that Mr. Rolleston was seated at the further end. She knew that he had been present at Frolic's death, but as he had not spoken, and she had never looked towards him, she could not possibly guess what had been his feelings on that occasion.

“Bring me a footstool, Grace ; I have hurt my foot ! said Mr. Rolleston addressing his little, great-niece for the first time since his

arrival at Elmwood Lodge ; and that in a less awful tone than usual.

Though startled at his request, Grace brought the footstool, placed it before him ; and on his complaining that it was not comfortable, went of her own accord and brought him an easy comfort, expressing a hope that he was not in much pain, her pity for the moment overcoming her awe.

“ Not much ; a ricked ankle—that is all ; but you are a capital little nurse, Grace. What say you to going back with me to Rolleston Court in that capacity ? ”

His tone was so gentle that she glanced up in his face to ascertain if the words could have really proceeded from his lips ; but a frown gathered on his brow as he marked her look of wonder, and she turned away in silence, trembling at the thought of a residence beneath the roof of her father’s awful uncle, whom every body feared.

“ I understand your silence, and that pallid

cheek,—‘Go away! you are a bad, wicked man to make mamma and Julia cry.’—“I have not forgotten your words you find. Away with you, girl! out of my sight! you, like your father, may rue the day you thwarted me,” exclaimed Mr. Rolleston in a voice of thunder.

And away went the terrified Grace, as fast as her trembling limbs could bear her, not feeling safe till she was reseated by the side of Ernest Dudley.

The sketch was completed—poor Frolic laid in his grave;—and the large stone placed over it, just as the bell rang for dressing.

“Are you really going early to-morrow?” asked Grace Trevyllian in a sad, and timid voice, as she walked between Mr. Dudley and his son towards the house.

“Yes!” replied Ernest.

“Then I shall not see you again, for Mrs. Bradley told me just now that I was not fit to be seen with such red eyes, and should not come into the drawing-room this evening; and

I do not wish to be there now that dear Julia is gone. So good bye ! I shall never forget how very kind you have both been to me," she said half holding out a hand to each, which was kindly pressed by both, for Mr. Dudley under a cold and formal exterior, had a warm and generous heart.

" Good bye !" said Ernest. " You are a kind, good little creature ; and I wish you had a happier home. Remember you have promised not to fret, but to keep as gay as you can, and if I can serve you at any time you must look on me as a brother, and claim my aid."

" Thank you !" faltered Grace pressing the hand that still held hers ; and then running away to hide the emotion which threatened to choke her.

" I am glad to see, Ernest, that you can show kindness to a child, without caring for ridicule," observed Mr. Dudley to his son, when Grace was out of sight.

“ I fear I do not bear ridicule as philosophically as you suppose, sir;” replied Ernest with an ingenuous blush. “ I must have been a savage not to feel for that poor child, who has one of the warmest and most affectionate of hearts ;—nor is she a dunce as they assert ; her information though desultory, from having no one to direct her studies, is extraordinary, and her powers of understanding and appreciating the books which she has read, singularly great in one so young.”

“ I suspected as much, though she said but little in my presence. If your mother were less of an invalid I should be tempted to engage her interest in the child’s behalf. The tone in which she said—I have nothing to love now—cannot be soon forgotten, it so completely spoke the desolation of a warm, young heart, whose best affections had been chilled, by harshness or neglect. I knew something of this in my own young days, for I was only

a step son ; and that threw me upon study, making me what some consider cold.”

“ Your wife and son do not think you cold,” said Ernest with a quivering lip, pressing his hand.

“ I hope not, Ernest ; I have tried to save you from this suffering, but I begin to fear that I have lived too much to myself, bringing you up in greater seclusion than was needful or prudent, because I am unsocial myself ; we must amend this. But that poor child ! I cannot get her out of my head ; she would make a noble woman, if properly trained ; timid and awkward from neglect and harshness, yet so bold and devoted in defence of the object of her affection. I really believe she would have been torn to pieces rather than give up her favourite, I never saw such an eye in my life ; and wonder those boys did not shrink abashed from her indignant glance, yet this very warmth and strength of affection may work her woe ; through that affection

may she receive the death wound to her peace. Poor child ! she is much to be pitied."

"She is indeed, sir. So grateful for one little service ; the excess of her gratitude proving her unused to kindness."

The Dudleys departed in the morning, as they had proposed, to the great delight of the young Bradleys, whose dislike to Ernest was increased from finding themselves compelled to apologise to him and Grace for their late violence ; not being upheld by their mother, who wished it to appear that they had mistaken wishes for orders.

Mr. Rolleston left Elmwood Lodge soon after without naming Grace, who kept out of his sight ; and without asking any of the Bradleys to pay him a visit, as his fair hostess had hoped and expected.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ALL gone now!” were the words that rose to Grace’s lips;—“all gone now!”—was the thought that weighed on Grace’s heart, as she sat on the succeeding day near Frolic’s grave.

Mr. Bradley had insisted on her having a week’s holyday, and had still more strongly insisted on her not being taunted, threatened, or treated harshly by any member of his household; he had made her presents—he had called her to sit beside him;—but he could not renew the spirits that had been broken—the hopes

that had been crushed ;—he could not awaken a feeling of kindness or sympathy for her lonely state in any one of his family, though he could protect her from open harshness :—he could not even always prevent the bitter sneer, the contemptuous look—the more than hinted reproach, when he was absent ; thus Grace stood almost as much alone as before, the only sunny spot in the wintry waste around, the certainty that Mr. Bradley would protect her to the utmost of his power. But that power was not omnipotent ; he was frequently absent, and when at home, though his heart was all kindness, he was ill-fitted to soothe and cheer a keenly sensitive girl of strong imagination, who, driven by sneers to solitude and lonely study, took little part or pleasure in the realities of life, having earnestly striven to forget them, so painfully had those realities pressed on her youthful spirit.

Miss Heywood was not a pleasing teacher, and her instructions were always “dull, and often

stale and unprofitable," but it is doubtful if the week's holyday insisted on by Mr. Bradley were to the advantage of his little *protégée*. Mahomet made happiness to consist in occupation, and to a certain extent, all who have suffered and entered closely into the cause of their suffering, will, I think, agree with him. The Arabian Ruler knew much that was in the heart of man; his laws and promises are in most instances admirably calculated to promote the accomplishment of his views. How the followers of one so energetic himself, and so strong an advocate for occupation in others, came to be proverbial for their general indolence is one of those curious anomalies, which require thought and time to explain.

Epidemics seize on the feeblest frame—the gout attacks the weakest limb; and thoughts will revert to the most painful subject, and dwell upon it till mind and body sink beneath the torture. We may chain the limb—we may bridle the tongue:—but who shall stay the

mutiny of thought? Prayer and resolution and constant occupation are the only weapons which can be employed with any hope of conquest; but the heart must have been schooled by skillful teaching, or have suffered much, before it will admit this truth. When our spirits are still buoyant, though somewhat lowered—when our hopes are still bright, though somewhat dimmed; we dwell on our woes and talk of the luxury of grief; but when sorrow upon sorrow has bowed our spirits to the earth, and all its buoyancy is gone—when the brightness of our hopes is all departed—when our tears have all been shed, and a woe has come upon us that no weeping can assuage, then do we feel that grief is not a luxury—that memory is not a joy;—and shrinking with a maddening brain from thoughts of what has been, as the poor tortured wretch still writhing in his agony shrinks from a fresh infliction, we pray for power to endure; yet feeling all the anguish of endurance apply to occupation which may leave us little time to

remember, if it gives us not a fresh pursuit on which to spend our energies, instead of wasting them in grief. With too little time allowed to thought the mind becomes inconsequent and frivolous ; but with too much it preys upon itself like ravening beasts that will devour their kind, if not supplied with proper food. Action and thought should go together ; and humble fervent prayer guide each.

Grace had received little beneficial schooling from others ; and though she had suffered much was not old enough to know that the indulgence of grief was not a luxury, or to understand the wisdom of occupation. She was glad to be relieved from learning dull, wearying lessons, and then standing before the cold and unfriendly Miss Heywood to repeat them ; but it would have been better for the mind to have been thus occupied, than left the prey of brooding and unprofitable sorrow. Sometimes she would start up abruptly and pass quickly along the walks trying to stop

her tears and be gay as she had promised Ernest Dudley; but wherever she went the thought went with her, that she had no one to love, and no one to love her. Frolic had been so long connected in her mind with her happy early days, with her parents, and sister, that she had, unconsciously, identified him with these dear relations, till he had become part and portion with, or at least the representative of, those whom she loved with such a strong affection, and his death seemed to sever the link between them.

Then Julia, the sister on whom she doted, whom she had so longed to see—had come and was gone;—they might not meet again for years—possibly never. And had her coming brought all the joy hoped for by that loving, lonely child? No—and that was the worst of all; she felt though she could not have expressed the feeling in the simple, yet beautiful language of the poetess :—

“ Not with her own heart’s lovingness,
Was she beloved again.”

She said to herself that it was unreasonable to expect that Julia, so beautiful, so accomplished, so petted by all, should feel as she did, the ugly, the stupid, the object of general contempt; but the saying this to herself, though nothing but the plain truth, and the proper prosaic way of stating the question, brought little alleviation to her disappointment; the very excuse only proved more plainly that there was something to be excused.

“ And dear Julia was kind, very kind; and I am sadly ungrateful,” she would repeat to herself; yet still the thought returned day after day, let her strive to banish it as she would. She felt that in her very kindness there was a something unsatisfactory; a something not clearly developed, yet to be guessed at, which hinted that Julia’s affection was not sufficiently ardent or constant to satisfy one so keenly sensitive as that loving and enthusiastic child; or to stand the test of time or

circumstance ; yet when this suspicion came across her mind she repelled it with indignation, blaming herself for the thought, and kissing the turquoise ring with streaming eyes.

No one interfered with her solitary watchings;—the family, angry at having been rebuked on her account, passed by with contemptuous looks. She tried to read ; but unable to comprehend the words before her the book was soon laid aside to indulge in destroying thought, till Mr. Bradley, who had left the Lodge the day but one after his visitors, shocked at her looks on his return at the end of a fortnight, talked of calling in medical advice, though Grace asserted that she was very well ; but before he could put his resolution into practice an event occurred which changed his purpose.

As Grace was sitting in her accustomed corner of the school-room, striving to learn a most uninteresting list of names and dates, a

message was delivered desiring her presence in the saloon. Expecting only some cold command from Mrs. Bradley concerning a frock which had been talked of in the morning, she never raised her eyes till startled from her apathy by hearing a strange voice exclaim:—

“That the sister of Julia Trevyllian whom I saw at Brighton!”

“You see what she is; I warned you not to be disappointed;” replied Mrs. Bradley.

The stranger’s exclamation was any thing but flattering; and Grace’s sallow cheek flushed slightly at the words; yet the voice was so soft, that she ventured to look up at the speaker, a pale thin woman of a certain age, clad in a plain black travelling dress; not handsome, but with a most sweet and pleasing expression of countenance.

“Come to me, my dear; I have a message to deliver from your old friend Captain Rawdon,” said Mrs. Parker, for such was the stranger’s name, speaking even more kindly

than was her wont, seeing that her sudden exclamation had given pain.

“ A message from dear Captain Rawdon ? Oh tell me ! tell me ! ” exclaimed the affectionate Grace, springing to the stranger’s side with an energy at utter variance with the dull, heavy step with which she had entered.

“ Will you never learn, Grace, to enter a room and receive visitors in a lady-like manner ? ” said Mrs. Bradley, whilst Mrs. Parker was silent for a moment from surprise and admiration at the sudden change effected in her appearance by the force of feeling, and the gratitude that beamed in those resplendent eyes.

“ Ah ! now you are more like my cousin Rawdon’s little wife, of whom he so often talks,” said Mrs. Parker, taking no notice of the rebuke of her hostess, though it had not been unremarked.

“ Are you Captain Rawdon’s cousin ? ” questioned Grace, creeping closer to her, and re-

garding her with confiding affection on the mere assertion of her relationship. "And will he come soon? I so long to see him!" she continued, whilst the tears came into her eager eyes.

"I am Captain Rawdon's cousin; but having exchanged into another regiment I fear he will not return to England for many years."

Grace turned away with a saddened look; and the tears which had rushed into her eyes from anticipated joy fell from her long silken lashes from disappointment.

"He has not forgotten you; but has sent his little wife a watch," continued Mrs. Parker presenting her with a morroco case.

"Then there is still some one who loves and thinks of me," murmured Grace unconsciously, pressing the watch to her lips ere she gave one glance at its beauty.

Fortunately the words were too low to reach Mrs. Bradley, and the entrance of some

titled guests at the same moment completely absorbed her attention.

“Does no one here then love you?” asked Mrs. Parker, in a whisper, the child’s remark confirming suspicions lately entertained by Rawdon, from vague reports which had reached his ears.

“Mr. Bradley is very kind,” said Grace with grateful warmth; but with an involuntary emphasis upon the Mr., and a timid glance at his lady.

“I have heard much of your conservatory;—may I ask your cousin to be my cicerone?” said Mrs. Parker to her hostess.

“Certainly; though I am afraid there is nothing worth looking at,” replied Mrs. Bradley, flattered by the request. “I will ring for my daughter to show it you,” she added; but Mrs. Parker had already left the room with Grace’s hand in hers.

“Tell me truly; are you happy here?” she

asked, having ascertained that no one was within hearing.

“Happy! oh no, no!” cried Grace with a convulsive shudder.

“Rawdon feared as much. Should you like to leave Elmwood Lodge?”

The poor girl looked up in her face with a wild, eager gaze to read her purpose, as she answered in a hollow whisper—“Yes.”

“I have no husband, and no child; Rawdon was kind to both, and bade me repay that kindness by my care for you. I seek in foreign lands that health which neither change of air nor change of scene can ever bring again; will you go with me, Grace, and stand to me in the place of my lost child? Will you regard me as a mother?”

“May I go with you? Will you really take me?” questioned the agitated girl, unable to believe so great a happiness, for to her grateful heart Captain Rawdon’s cousin appeared perfection.

A warm embrace removed her doubts.

Grace trembled as she waited for Mr. Bradley's answer when applied to by Mrs. Parker ; but that gentleman, after some little consideration, gave his consent to the plan. Mrs. Parker's character stood high for worth and talent ; she was Rawdon's cousin—acted with his sanction—had a good jointure—and undertook that Grace should enjoy the advantages of the best masters to be found in France and Italy. Then the child was herself anxious to go—was neither well nor happy at Elmwood Lodge, and he feared never would be ; and though he had no expectation of her becoming highly accomplished, judging from the reports of his wife and governess, still it was as well that she should have the chance.

Such were the reasons that induced Mr. Bradley's consent, and his lady, though surprised at the proposition, and a little envious that the offer had not been made to one of her own daughters, declined saying any thing on

the subject, willing to retain the right of future praise or blame as things should turn out well or ill. Her dislike to Grace having been increased by what she termed the fuss made about her by Mr. Bradley, she never wished to set eyes on her again; had she guessed that Mr. Rolleston had offered her a home, she would have been eager to send her out of the kingdom.

Mrs. Parker having been ordered abroad for her health, anxious that there should be no unnecessary delay, overruled all objections about dresses, &c.; and the next day Grace Trevyllian was leaning out of the carriage, as it passed through the gate of Elmwood Lodge, to catch one last look of the house where she had passed so many years, gazing too with a half melancholy expression of countenance, though she had never known one happy day within its walls; and, except from Mr. Bradley, had received no friendly word at parting. She was delighted at being with Mrs. Parker, who was

all kindness ; delighted too at the prospect of visiting France and Italy ; and yet so strong is the power of habit that she sighed as she looked back upon the lawns and shrubberies, the scene of her solitary rambles, and caught a glimpse of the library window the scene of her solitary studies ; perhaps poor Frolic had a share in that sigh, which was succeeded by a smile as she pressed the hand of her companion. The look—the silent pressure revealed the feelings of the heart.

Do not let my readers be alarmed ; I am not going to travel them over France and Italy, according to Mrs. Starke, or Mrs. Anybody else, in the vain hope of rivalling the beautiful ‘*Diary of an Ennuyee*,’ or producing such amusing, but ill natured caricatures of society in Europe, as a disappointed, and gossiping authoress has furnished of society in America. On the contrary, I intend to prove my sense and taste by abstaining from such a folly. Every body has travelled ; only the nobodies

have remained at home ;—and who writes for the nobodies ?

Not I ; so instead of prating of Paris and Geneva ; Florence, Rome, and Naples, to say nothing of indulging in a little classical and antiquarian enthusiasm concerning Pompeii, either Italy's or Bulwer's (the last possibly the most brilliant and beautiful of the two), I shall take the liberty of passing over several years with no longer notice than can be given during the transit of Grace Trevyllian, now eighteen, from the town of B—— to Elmwood Lodge, a distance not exceeding seven miles. Nay I will be very merciful, and not even occupy the whole of that time, as hating long explanations myself, I never willingly, that is knowingly, inflict them upon others ; being prosy not of intent, but of mere ignorance and simplicity.

Mrs. Parker's conviction that neither change of air or scene would restore the health of former days was but too correct, and after trying all the prescribed remedies, and bearing

her sufferings with a cheerful piety which lightened her pangs, she died in the arms of the affectionate Grace whom she had loved as a child ; and who had long since learnt to regard her as a mother. Having no near relations her last earthly cares had been for Grace to whom she bequeathed all that she had to bequeath, her income dying with her ; and one of her last acts had been to provide her with a fitting escort back to England in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Sutton, old and valued friends, who readily undertook to place Grace in safety with Mr. Bradley, who was more than ready to receive her beneath his roof.

Owing to various delays, it was full four months after Mrs. Parker's death before Grace Trevyllian landed at Dover, from whence she proceeded immediately to Elmwood Lodge, under the care of a confidential servant, Mr. Sutton, who would otherwise have attended her, being unexpectedly summoned to Ireland.

Though time, joined to the variety of foreign

travel and the cheering effects of kindness, had deadened the remembrance of her former suffering, Grace could not return to Elmwood Lodge without some misgivings as to her future comfort ; nor could she suppress a sigh as she passed through the gates, contrasting the different feelings with which she had passed them some four years back, holding the hand of her, now resting in a foreign grave.

Sympathy from Mrs. Bradley and her children she could not expect, their tastes and habits were so dissimilar ; but as a woman she hoped to be spared those contemptuous looks and galling sneers which had so crushed her spirit as a child ; dull lessons and open harsh rebukes were of course out of the question, Miss Heywood having completed Eliza's education had quitted Elmwood Lodge some time before ; and Mrs. Bradley however little inclined to be her friend, or however unwilling to shelter an almost pennyless cousin, for till she came of age Grace was only to receive the interest of

the six hundred pounds bequeathed by Mrs. Parker, could not send her supperless to bed, or put her in the corner as she had formerly done; and to maintain her character for amiability must wear the semblance of cordiality. The boys now become men in others' eyes as well as their own, would find some more manly and amusing employment than tormenting their cousin; Mrs. Bradley and the girls could no longer taunt her with stupidity and sullenness, all the effect of their own cruel harshness, for Grace felt a confidence in her own powers which would protect her from these petty annoyances; and dear kind Mr. Bradley at least would give her a hearty welcome, however scantily his promise, that others would be glad to see her should be fulfilled.

Yet, despite these cheering reflections, and a conscious superiority, which she felt must command respect, no sooner had the carriage entered the gates, and her eye rested on the scenes of her early woes and wrongs, than an

anxious fear came creeping over her, and she glanced eagerly from side to side to catch some object that should be a happy omen; but no such happy omen met her gaze. The trees and the shrubs had grown a little during her absence, but all else was the same as when she had left it, except that then the trees had been leafless—now they were rich with foliage: then it had been winter—now it was summer.

The half hope in which she had indulged, that Mr. Bradley might be waiting near the house expecting her arrival was disappointed: none of the family were to be seen, and a chill was struck to her warm heart as the butler, who answered the bell, pronounced—“Not at home!” with a loud voice, concluding that the customary question had been asked.

“Not at home!” repeated poor Grace, in utter dismay, wondering what was to become of her thus turned from her cousin’s door.

“No, ma’am,” said the butler respectfully, appreciating the handsome style of her mourn-

ing. "My mistress, with the young ladies and gentlemen, are all staying at Painsley, and will not be back till late to-night or to-morrow ; and my master was called to town on particular business the day before yesterday."

"Then was not I expected, Watson?" she asked, turning pale at the thought.

"Miss Grace was expected ma'am," replied the butler staring with surprise that the strange lady should be acquainted with his name.

"I am Miss Grace," she said with a half smile at her own alarm, and a still more decided one at the butler's wonder, whose eyes were opened to their widest possible extent.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, I did not know you," stammered Watson. If his wonder had been great before, it was much increased when he assisted from the carriage, not the stunted, scraggy, sallow, sickly child whom he had assisted in some years before ; but a graceful girl of middle height, with a clear complexion, a sweet and intelligent expression of

countenance ; whose large dark hazel eyes with their long lashes (the only good features in her face) were as a tablet, or a richly illuminated scroll, in which were traced a thousand pure and beautiful emotions, the promptings of a high, and generous spirit.

No wonder that Watson had failed to recognise her!—yet there were the features little altered ;—but then their expression was completely changed. A fine climate, with the ever watchful care of affection, had restored health to her fading frame, buoyancy to her drooping spirit ; and the conviction that she was not only loved but worthy of being loved, had replaced the awkwardness induced by harsh rebuke and unkind neglect, by a gentle, graceful ease ; a mingling of humility and confidence ; a spirited softness. Grief for the death of her valued friend had something checked the playful gaiety, for which she had been distinguished during the latter part of her stay in Italy—the playful gaiety of happi-

ness; but still she was cheerful and full of smiles, though her light joyous, laugh was now but rarely heard.

Her smile, at Watson's non-recognition, passed away as she followed him across the hall. The only apartment ready for her reception was the school-room, the scene of her greatest misery; and her sleeping chamber was the very same which had been assigned her as a child; the little white washed room with its small, miserly window, coved ceiling, and uncurtained bed, whereon she had so often cried herself to sleep. The affection and indulgence of Mrs. Parker had been too judicious to make splendid luxuries absolute requisites to her comfort; but she saw in this symptoms of the temper which had wrought the misery of her younger days. She felt that though years had changed herself, they had left Mrs. Bradley still the same; and it was with difficulty that she repressed her tears as her eye fell on the corner where she had so

often sat poring over lessons beyond her comprehension ; shrinking from the observation of Miss Heywood, and bowing her little face upon her knees to hide her streaming eyes.

It is always melancholy to arrive on a visit, and find none to give us welcome ;—to see no smile—to meet no ready hand, particularly after a long separation ; but this was worse. Circumstances might account for the absence of the family ; but the ordering these rooms was a premeditated, not an accidental act. The woman was doomed to endure the same pangs and insults as the child ; a little modified by circumstances, but not by inclination. The hopes which she had been nursing into warmth and brightness were chilled, destroyed ; and she would have given way to tears that sprang unbidden to her eyes, had she not been changed in mind yet more than person ; still better schooled in real wisdom, than in accomplishments and graces.

The example of Mrs. Parker's cheerful

resignation and sustained energy under all her trials had not been lost on her affectionate pupil ; and though Grace foresaw a renewal of her former pangs, for trifles to the discriminating are the keys of character, she resolutely persisted in occupying herself with other objects, instead of permitting her thoughts to dwell on coming evils, till the mind weakened, and harrassed by such vain forebodings should sink beneath the load.

She tried the old piano that had stood untuned for many months, till its discordant notes could be endured no longer ; unpacked and arranged her wardrobe as well as she could in the same small chest of drawers that had been hers in childhood, (a work of some vexation and difficulty to one orderly in her habits) eat her solitary dinner with very healthful slowness, instead of sending it away untouched as she would have preferred ; and walked through the gardens and shrubberies trying to be delighted with the delicious cool-

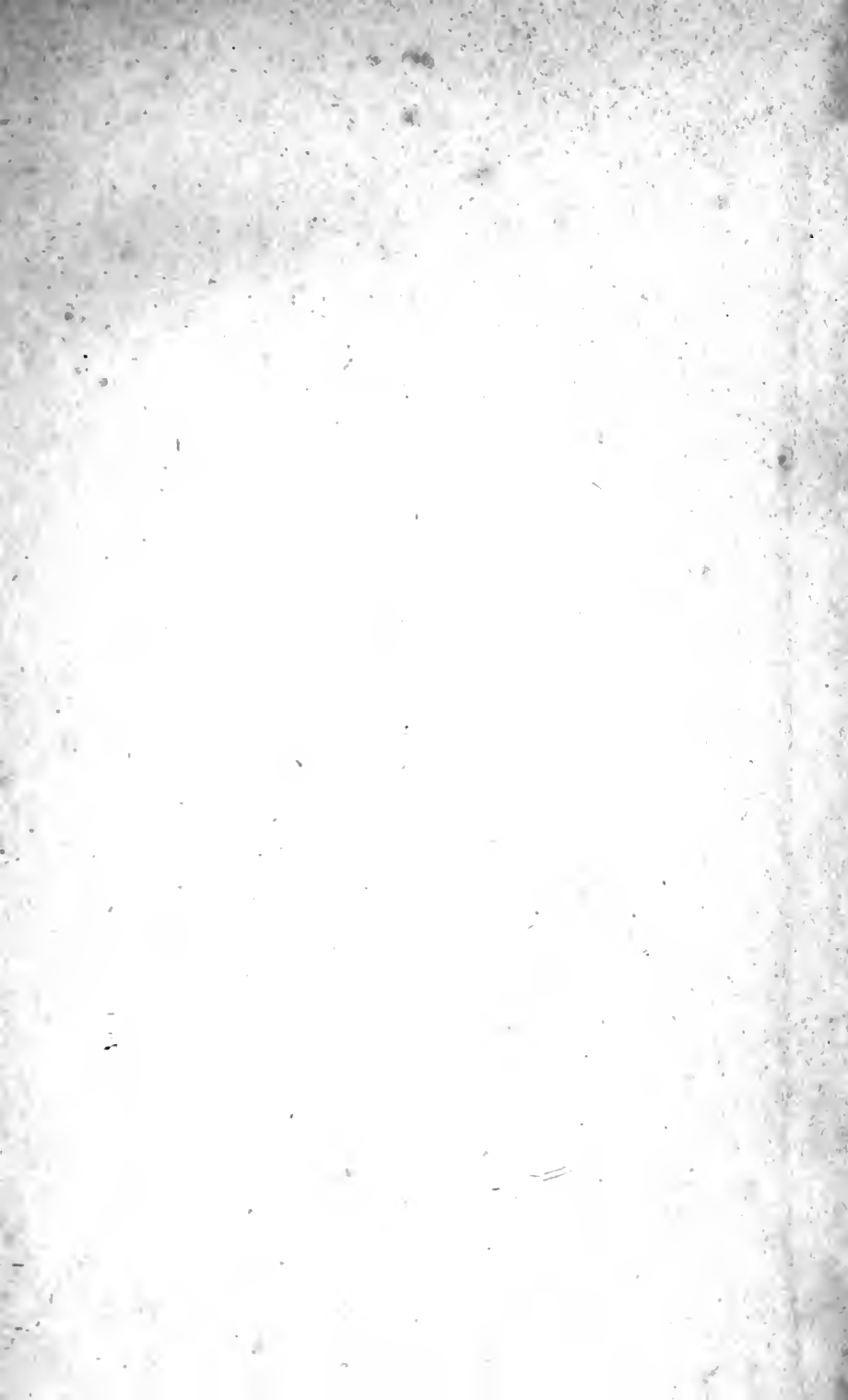
ness of the evening, instead of lingering by Frolic's grave. But with all this mental heroism so resolutely practised for a time, we will not assert that her fortitude did not at length forsake her, and that she did not cry herself to sleep as she had so often done before on that self same pillow.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by T. C. Newby, Angel Hill, Bury.







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